

Sini Mikkola

# “In Our Body the Scripture Becomes Fulfilled”

Gendered Bodiliness and the Making of the Gender System  
in Martin Luther’s Anthropology  
(1520–1530)

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Helsinki 2017



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## ABSTRACT

“In Our Body the Scripture Becomes Fulfilled”: Gendered Bodiliness and the Making of the Gender System in Martin Luther’s Anthropology (1520–1530)

This doctoral dissertation examines Martin Luther’s view of the human being during a decade of ecclesiastical, social, and political turmoil. The vital perspectives in scrutinizing Luther’s anthropology are gender, bodiliness, sexuality, and power. The study first asks how gendered bodiliness was treated in Luther’s discussions on femininity and masculinity, and, consequently, in what way he constructed proper feminine and masculine ways of being and developed the gender system. Under scrutiny are the ideals, norms, and expectations that he framed on the grounds of the gendered body. Thirdly, it is asked whether Luther’s views varied according to historical and textual context, and especially if there are differences between his views of female and male ways of being that are presented in theory, on the one hand, and in practical situations, on the other.

The most important contextual factors that set the background for analyzing Luther’s viewpoints are, by and large, the debate on the proper kind of Christian life—whether it should be lived in the cloister or in matrimony—and Luther’s changing personal situation from Augustinian friar to husband and father. The time frame of the study is set from 1520 to 1530—a decade that is less studied in modern research from the viewpoint of gender than, for example, the following one. The structure of the study is thematic, yet it follows a loose chronology. It is thus easier to explore a possible chronological shift in Luther’s language and thinking, and especially whether changes in his personal life or in church and society somehow affected his views concerning the body, gendered ways of being, and the gender system.

Many of the key concepts of the study—such as gender and the gender system, power, authority, and otherness—have been adopted from gender studies. Methodologically, the texts are examined through a close critical reading and content analysis of the sources to discuss both the explicit and the implicit dimensions of Luther’s discussion. Texts from the *Weimarer Ausgabe* (D. Martin Luther’s *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*) are used as the source material. Luther’s texts from the time period of 1520 to 1530 have been read and systematically searched from the viewpoint of themes of bodiliness and gender. The guiding principles in choosing the texts under scrutiny have been: first, that they offer a representative and, second, that they provide a versatile sample of Luther’s views on the topic of the dissertation within the chosen time period.

The study shows that Luther formulated his views on gender and the gender system firmly on the basis of human bodiliness. The penetrable theoretical idea that Luther deduced from gendered bodiliness was gender hierarchy: the woman's subordination and otherness, and the man's normativity and dominion. Luther participated in the reconstruction of femininity and masculinity in close interaction with the past and the present: he was in several ways affected by and bound to his medieval heritage and to the views of his contemporaries. Furthermore, the study proves that overall, Luther's thinking concerning the gender system did not undergo major changes during the 1520s, but instead involved smaller adjustments.

The analyses of real-life situations reveal that Luther could in practice be flexible in his viewpoints concerning the limits that one's gender constituted—he allowed different rules especially for himself, for instance. However, in many cases regarding his fellow men and women he applied his theoretical views in practice in a very strict sense. Therefore, it is not the difference between theory and practice per se that is pervasive in Luther's texts. Whether there is continuity or discontinuity between Luther's overall theoretical views and his practical advice, for example, is most profoundly dictated by the context and the overall situation. The study proves that the difference between Luther's practical views and theory is chiefly dictated by subsidiarity. The two core ideas are: (1) the closer to Luther, the more special the case, and (2) the more strategically important for Luther, the more special the case.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Producing a doctoral thesis is much like giving birth to a baby. I have delivered two of the latter, so I know what I am talking about. First, the dissertation, in the same way as labor, demands very hard, even body-aching work. Second, you cannot cope without the help of others.

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# I INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1521, a long-bearded aristocrat named Junker Jörg was dwelling in Wartburg Castle. From the centuries-old fortress built on a hill over 400 meters high, he had a magnificent view down to Eisenach, the town nearby, and beyond. Eagerly he wrote letters to Wittenberg, about two hundred kilometers distant as the crow flies, and waited for the carriers to bring back news from his comrades. On July 13, he lamented: "...my untamed flesh burns in great fire, that is: I should be inflamed by the spirit but I am inflamed by the flesh, lusts, laziness, free time, [and] sleepiness..."<sup>1</sup>

In reality, Junker Jörg was a fictional character. He was Martin Luther (1483–1546),<sup>2</sup> an Augustinian friar in disguise—without his tonsure and robe, dressed as a knight.<sup>3</sup> Wartburg Castle was not his estate, but a hideout ever since he had been condemned as an outlaw in the Diet of Worms a couple of months earlier.<sup>4</sup> What was real, however, was Luther's anxiety. He was deemed a heretic, as he had been excommunicated by papal bull at the turn of the year 1520–1521,<sup>5</sup> and an outlaw whose life was worth nothing should someone want to put an end to his days. He was safe—for the time being—through the favor of Elector Frederick III<sup>6</sup> (1463–1525) of Saxony, who had arranged for him to stay at Wartburg Castle.<sup>7</sup> When Luther could return to Wittenberg, and what was going to happen to him or the evangelical movement, remained as yet unknown.

No wonder that Luther's flesh was burning and he was seething with different emotions. Indeed, Luther's residence at Wartburg Castle, from May 1521 to

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1 WA BR 2, no. 418, 356, 9–10. To Philipp Melanchthon (July 13, 1521). This passage is analyzed, among others, in Chapter IV.2.

2 Of Luther's biographies, the most thorough is Martin Brecht's tripartite series of monographs in German: Brecht 1981; 1986; 1987. The books are also available as English translations. There is a myriad of newer, yet less in-depth works. For a thematic approach, see, e.g., Hendrix 2009; Shepherd 2016. For a chronological approach, in addition to Brecht's studies, see, e.g., Beutel 2003; Methuen 2014; Hendrix 2015; Mullett 2015; Leppin 2016a. One of the newest biographies—and of the most interesting ones—is Lyndal Roper's *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet* (2016), whose psycho-historical approach has already been disputed.

3 WA BR 2, no. 410, 228. To Georg Spalatin (May 14, 1521); WA BR 2, no. 413, 348. To Philipp Melanchthon (May 26, 1521); Brecht 1986, 11.

4 Brecht 1983, 451; Methuen 2014, 14–17; Mullett 2015, 167–168.

5 Martin Brecht has pointed out that the whole question of dating Luther's excommunication is disputable. Brecht 1983, 406–407.

6 Also known as Frederick the Wise (*Friedrich der Weise*). The elector of Saxony from 1486 until his death in 1525, he is henceforth referred to as Frederick the Wise.

7 Rublack 2005, 23; Mullett 2015, 167–169. The elector justified his favor toward Luther at least partly for political reasons. Brecht 1983, 448.

March 1522,<sup>8</sup> presented several spiritual, mental, and bodily challenges.<sup>9</sup> But what exactly was this burning and boiling of the flesh? Was it merely a depiction of his spiritual struggles, as has been suggested?<sup>10</sup> Or could it be that what Luther meant by fleshly burning was something more than an abstraction, something more down-to-earth? Does it in fact tell us something about Luther's bodily reality as well? And if not, how should one interpret, for instance, Luther's greetings from Wartburg to his colleague's "flesh and rib,"<sup>11</sup> meaning his wife?

## 1. THE AIM AND SCHOLARLY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study is based on the premise that bodiliness—or fleshliness—is an essential part in understanding how Luther viewed the human being. The aim of the thesis is threefold: first, to decipher *how gendered bodiliness was treated in Luther's discussions on femininity and masculinity*. Under scrutiny are the meanings that the concepts "body" and "flesh" acquired in Luther's thinking, as well as gender-specific ways of constructing the significance of the human body in his writings. Second, the study aims to analyze *the ideals, norms, and expectations vis-à-vis womanhood, manhood, and the gender system* that Luther formulated. Thirdly, this study investigates *the interrelation of theory and practice in Luther's writings, which represent different genres and different years*. Were his views concerning the body, gender, and the gender system divergent—and if so, in what way in differing contexts?

The Reformation scholars Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks have maintained that Luther must always be seen "from the dual perspective of theory and practice."<sup>12</sup> Karant-Nunn continues in another context: "...even the Reformer's most theoretical writings were interpenetrated by expressions of his personal stances and frequently by accounts of his experiences."<sup>13</sup> These notions, as well as the frequently advanced view of Luther's contextuality,<sup>14</sup> have served as inspira-

8 Luther thus stayed at Wartburg Castle for about ten months, although he visited Wittenberg briefly in the beginning of December in 1521. Mikkola 2014b, 95–96; Mullett 2015, 175.

9 Regarding bodily troubles, his constipation was probably the worst. On Luther's constipation at Wartburg Castle, see, e.g., WA BR 2, no. 407, 333. To Philipp Melanchthon (May 12, 1521); WA BR 2, no. 417, 354. To Georg Spalatin (June 10, 1521); WA BR 2, no. 420, 364. To Georg Spalatin (July 15, 1521). The condition that troubled him time and again, especially during his stay at Wartburg Castle, has not exactly been a target of scholarly interest. Rare exceptions are Roper 2010, 291; Cortright 2011, 200–201.

10 In the *American Edition of Luther's Works*, this passage is compared by the editor to other passages that more clearly describe spiritual battles. See Krodell 1963, 28 (fn.10), 232, 412 *et passim*.

11 WA BR 2, no. 409, 335. To Johann Agricola (May 12, 1521).

12 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 9. The words "theory" or "theoretical" and "practice" and "practical" are discussed in the following chapter.

13 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 3. I am grateful to Professor Karant-Nunn for granting access to this article draft.

14 Noted, for example, in Lull 2003, 39; Cortright 2011, 2, 180; Gerle 2015, 24.



tion for the third viewpoint of the study. As a whole, the thesis is concerned with intersectionality,<sup>15</sup> asking how different factors—such as the historical situation and the genre of a particular text, or the societal position, age, and gender, among others, of Luther and contemporaries related to certain texts or events—have an effect on Luther's views concerning the gendered body, womanhood, and manhood.

Thus, the thesis discusses Luther's idea of the human being—that is, his anthropology—from the perspectives of bodiliness, gender, and sexuality. Especially important aspects in the study are power relations, especially between the sexes, and more broadly the contemporary norms regarding the gender system and the societal system. The power relations between Luther and his audience are taken into account as well; namely, his way of building his authority as regards his listeners is fundamental in understanding the way in which he formulates his points in different contexts.

The study takes into account the various social, religious, cultural, and political factors behind Luther's thinking, aiming to contextualize his views as thoroughly as possible. The starting point is that Luther's formulations of the body and gender were affected by his interaction with other people and by his need to react to different issues or phenomena in changing historical situations. The overall approach of the study is chronological—Luther's theoretical viewpoints during the 1520s are compared with practical situations, as revealed by his correspondence. Most of the cases are picked from the second half of the decade, mainly due to the availability of the source material, but shorter cases from the first half of the 1520s are also included. The sources and the structure of the study are discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter.

Previous scholarship regarding Luther's views on women and men has emphasized the significance of Luther's texts from the 1530s and the 1540s. In particular, the *Lectures on Genesis*<sup>16</sup> from 1535 to 1545 have been deemed some of the most valuable materials and thus extensively used.<sup>17</sup> This study focuses instead on the 1520s, which until now has remained a less-studied decade from the viewpoint of Luther's gendered anthropology. Indeed, one reason for focusing on this period of time is the need to survey a decade which has been the object of far

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15 For the theory of intersectionality, see Nash 2008; Lykke 2010, *Framing Intersectionality* 2011. For notions of intersectionality at the beginning of the Early Modern Era, see Wunder 1998, 205. Intersectionality is closely linked to modern discussions of postcolonial studies. See, e.g., Kerner 2016.

16 The text can be found in WA 42, 43, and 44: *In Genesin Enarrationum Reverendi Patris, Domini Doctoris Martini Lutheri*.

17 For instance, the Finnish scholar Sirpa Aalto has explicated her confidence in the supremacy of the *Lectures on Genesis* in her licentiate thesis. See Aalto 1991, 40. Jussi Koivisto justifies the choice of sources in his doctoral thesis on Luther and evil, for his part, by noting that the lectures represent Luther's mature theology. See Koivisto 2012, 17–18.

less interest than the succeeding ones. Also, the time period in question offers two important contextual factors that make it a decade well worth exploring: the first is the religious and sociopolitical turmoil that began in Germany in the beginning of the 1520s, and the second is Luther's personal turmoil, including his marriage to the former nun Katharina von Bora in 1525 and the change in his social position and self-understanding from an Augustinian brother to a husband and father. I shall define in detail the characteristics of the time period in the next chapter when discussing the structure of the study.

\* \* \*

On the whole, Luther's anthropology is not an unexplored theme. It is discussed in some respect in every study concerning Luther and his thought—even if in most studies this is done implicitly. Several studies discussing Luther's anthropology from the perspective of “the point of contact between anthropology and soteriology”<sup>18</sup> are available. I have been most impressed by an old, yet fascinating monograph from 1969 by Professor Steven Ozment, entitled *Homo Spiritualis: A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson and Martin Luther (1509–16) in the Context of Their Theological Thought*.<sup>19</sup> Other contributions have been made from the 1980s until the 2010s by various scholars of Luther, such as Bishop and Professor Emeritus Eero Huovinen and Professor Notger Slenczka.<sup>20</sup>

Most of these studies discuss the human being as both a spiritual and a fleshly creature, on the one hand, and the structure of the human being as spirit, soul, and body, on the other. What these analyses offer on the issue of human corporality as such is surprisingly modest, since they concentrate mainly on discussing soul and spirit and thus hardly touch the issue of bodiliness. Illuminative of all these studies and the dismissal of the bodily aspect is Professor Anna Vind's short analysis of the body: “The purpose of the third part of man, the body, is to be used and trained by the knowledge of the soul and the wisdom of the spirit.”<sup>21</sup> Vind's comment crystallizes the interest that theological research has had, particularly in spirituality and theological ideas.

The bodily aspect of Luther's anthropology has been studied by only a few scholars.<sup>22</sup> Professor Charles Cortright's quite recent doctoral dissertation about

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18 Janz 1983, 6.

19 Ozment 1969.

20 Huovinen 1981; Slenczka 2014. Other studies are, for example, Janz 1983; Asendorf 1988, 359–417; Blaumeiser 1995; zur Mühlen 1995; Raunio 2010; Vind 2015; Karimies 2016.

21 Vind 2015, 74.

22 This subject is also discussed in Gerle 2015, 26.

the human body in Luther's theology is one of the rare examples of this approach.<sup>23</sup> It discusses bodiliness from the perspectives of creation, sexuality, and sickness. Perhaps due to this multiplicity of viewpoints, at times it lacks the type of in-depth analysis that a reader might hope for. The study is invaluable, however, as one of the first proper discussions concerning Luther's views on the body. Another recent study concerning Luther and the body is Professor Elisabeth Gerle's *Sinnlighetens närvaro: Luther mellan kroppskult och kroppsförakt* (2015).<sup>24</sup> The monograph examines how the body has been viewed in the history of Christianity, especially in Luther's thinking. Gerle's eyes are first and foremost on the present, however, as her purpose is to reread the history of the body in order to provide tools for an understanding of how the human body is viewed today and, above all, to offer inspiration to change the present discussion on the body. The article on the embodied theology of Luther by the doctoral student Marion Deschamp deserves to be mentioned as well. Her discussion focuses on the question of the extent to which human bodies mattered to Luther in the act of believing.<sup>25</sup>

Luther's views on gender, especially womanhood, have been studied somewhat over the years, although this approach is still not a part of mainstream research on Luther. It seems that in Reformation studies, gender has not in general been taken as a category of analysis, even though it is valid when discussing not only women (and men—in my opinion) and the family, but also history and historical changes as a whole.<sup>26</sup> Professor Merry Wiesner-Hanks has aptly described the manner of conducting gender research within historical studies as the “add women and stir” method, if and when gender is regarded merely as a distinct category at most having to do with women. According to Wiesner-Hanks, “It is certainly simpler to add new material to traditional courses, texts, and interpretations by just tacking it on...”<sup>27</sup> Due to Wiesner-Hanks's sensitivity toward gender and other issues formerly regarded as minor, from the viewpoint of this thesis her work is invaluable.<sup>28</sup> The same can be said of the articles and monographs by Professor Susan Karant-Nunn, another established scholar in the field of the Reformation and gender.<sup>29</sup> Both of these scholars have not only contributed to gender-sensitive Reformation scholarship with their research, but through various lenses they have been able to look at Luther and the Reformation era. Furthermore, in 2003 they

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23 Cortright 2011.

24 For Luther and the body, see also Roper 2012. However, Roper discusses especially the portrayal and thus the reception of Luther's body.

25 Deschamp 2015.

26 See Matheson 1996, 98; Rublack 2002, esp. 2–7; Wiesner-Hanks 2002, 602.

27 Wiesner 1987, 317; Wiesner-Hanks 2002, 601.

28 See, e.g., Wiesner 1986; 1987; 1991; Wiesner-Hanks 2002; 2008; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2016.

29 See, e.g., Karant-Nunn 1982; 1997; 2002; 2008; 2010; 2012a; 2012b.

collected, translated, and edited a sourcebook, *Luther on Women*,<sup>30</sup> which has been of great value for this study.

Overall, the past decades have seen an increasing amount of gender-sensitive scholarship, which has begun to provide more diverse readings of the Reformation and its various agents, including Luther. Dr. Kristen Kvam's dissertation *Luther, Eve, and Theological Anthropology: Reassessing the Reformer's Response to the "Frauenfrage"* (1992) deserves to be mentioned as one of those rereadings of Luther.<sup>31</sup> One of the most influential studies for this thesis has been the monograph of Professor Mickey L. Mattox, entitled *Defender of the Most Holy Matriarchs: Martin Luther's Interpretation of the Women of Genesis in the Enarrationes In Genesin, 1535–1545* (2003),<sup>32</sup> which proves that Luther's views in the 1520s certainly differ from those of the 1530s and the 1540s. Even though the general timeline of the book goes beyond the scope of my study, the discussions in this study concerning Eve and Adam make use of the first chapter, which examines early Luther's comments in the 1520s on the Book of Genesis. Furthermore, there are numerous meritorious articles that discuss Luther's views on women in particular,<sup>33</sup> as well as those discussing women and gender in the Reformation era in general.<sup>34</sup>

As becomes clear by looking at the studies presented above, in their gender-sensitive work scholars have focused especially on women. Scholarship that focuses on both women and men, or particularly on men in Luther's thought, is still somewhat scarce. Of the studies concerning masculinity, one must especially credit the article collection *Masculinity in the Reformation Era* (2008), edited by Professor Emeritus Scott Hendrix and Susan Karant-Nunn. From this study's point of view, it contains many interesting findings, especially the two articles that focus on Luther's masculinity: *The Masculinity of Martin Luther: Theory, Practicality, and Humor* by Karant-Nunn and "*Lustful Luther*": *Male Libido in the Writings of the Reformer* by Merry Wiesner-Hanks.<sup>35</sup> Another particularly useful collection of articles from the perspective of masculinity is *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (2000), edited by Professor Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Dr. Bonnie Wheeler. Both

30 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003.

31 Kvam 1992.

32 Mattox 2003a.

33 See, e.g., Maron 1983; Roper 1983; Hinlicky 1988; Classen & Settle 1991; Mattox 2003b; Kvam 2004; Stjerna 2004; Bell 2005; Lo 2008; Matheson 2008; Ghiselli 2010; Wiberg Pedersen 2010; Pak 2012; Methuen 2013; Strohl 2014. I have written about Luther and women in Mikkola 2014a; 2015.

34 See, e.g., Bainton 1971; Roper 1989; *Frauen mischen sich ein* 1995; Matheson 1996; Rublack 1996; 1998; Roper 1997; Wunder 1998; *Frauen in der Zeit der Reformation* 1999 (cited via individual articles in the study); Allen 2002; Zitzlsperger 2003; Stjerna 2009; Thompson 2009; Crowther 2010; Methuen 2010; Scokir & Wiesner-Hanks 2010; Domröse 2011; Räisänen-Schröder 2013; Pak 2015.

35 Articles of particular interest are also, for example, Wunder 2002; Hendrix 2008.

of the abovementioned collections are cited in the study in relation to their individual articles. Yet another important contribution to men's studies is *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (2003) by Professor Ruth Mazo Karras.<sup>36</sup> The work of Karras discusses a somewhat earlier period than this study, as does the second article collection mentioned above. However, as the scholarship about men is still quite limited, all of these studies on masculinity are of utmost value for putting Luther's ideas on men—as well as putting Luther himself—in a proper context.

If gender has hitherto not been taken universally as a category of analysis in Reformation studies, one can pose the obvious counterquestion: has historical context been taken seriously in gender studies concerning the Reformation era? Dr. Jennifer C. Vaught, who has treated masculinity and emotion in Early Modern literature, answers in the negative. According to her, "Although recent theories of gender have focused on both men and women, they tend to underemphasize issues of history and agency."<sup>37</sup> The historical context has not always been fully taken into account in studies concerning Luther and gender either. As I noted above, many of the gender-sensitive Luther studies have made use of *Lectures on Genesis*.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly, his earlier views have, in many cases, been discussed merely among the later views or even mixed in with those. This way of examining Luther's texts has the danger of resulting in oversimplifications concerning his thinking and overlooking the significance of a certain time period and historical situation. This danger obviously concerns all Luther studies, not just those interested in gender.

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Luther's mental and spiritual processes have been quite thoroughly discussed in modern research by scholars representing the traditional line, as it were, of Luther research. Yet a thorough examination of the body-related roots of Luther's evaluation of the human being is still lacking.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the portrait of the reformer painted by the vast majority of Luther scholars hardly contains references to his body or his ideas about the body—not to mention their interrelation with the gender system. Luther's own bodily reality or his thoughts concerning bodily issues are not really discussed in the gender-sensitive Luther research either. Bodiliness is something that comes up in those discussions, but its role in Luther's views on the human being is not treated as seriously as it deserves.

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36 Karras 2003. See also Karras 2008a.

37 Vaught 2008, 7.

38 For example, Bell 2005; Lo 2008.

39 Gerle has also pointed this out in her recent study. Gerle 2015, 26–27.

Connecting to the previous point, a proper discussion of gender and the gender system in the writings of the younger Luther is lacking as well. In their sourcebook, Wiesner-Hanks and Karant-Nunn note, “Although a book-length study remains to be written, we can offer a summation of Luther’s conservation and innovation [concerning womanhood].”<sup>40</sup> The situation has improved since 2003, as the above presentation of recent scholarship shows—but not enough from my point of view. This thesis contributes to the discussion on Luther’s anthropology by offering new perspectives, thorough analyses of the meanings that the gendered body acquired in his thinking, and an investigation of the deductions he made regarding the gender system. Furthermore, gender is treated in this thesis not only through womanhood and femininity, but also through manhood and masculinity. Thus, the study adds to gender-sensitive Luther research the important viewpoint of masculinity—a perspective that until recently in most studies has been overlooked. The examination also provides historical and textual context in order to offer as profound a picture as possible of Luther’s thinking.

## 2. MAIN SOURCES AND STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

*Weimarer Ausgabe* (*D. Martin Luther’s Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*), henceforth referred to as WA, is used as the primary source of this study. This requires further elaboration, however. The source material consists of Luther’s collected works from the whole of his lifetime, comprising over a hundred volumes and approximately 80,000 pages of written material. As Timothy F. Lull has noted, the total amount of material is itself enough to overwhelm even the most enthusiastic researcher.<sup>41</sup> Such a sizable body of work poses a fundamental problem for a scholar: How is one to find and choose the most suitable material for a particular study? And how can one be sure that crucial texts are not omitted?

Charles Cortright has maintained in his doctoral dissertation that there are biblical texts concerning the body in Luther’s works, such as commentaries on the history of creation in Genesis.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, it is self-evident that the account of the events in the Garden of Eden is taken under scrutiny in this study also. Yet other proper texts on the body are somewhat less obvious. By and large, the guiding principles in choosing the texts to review have been, first, that they are representative and, second, that they offer a versatile sample of Luther’s views on the topic of the dissertation within the chosen time period.

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40 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 9.

41 Lull 2003, 39.

42 Cortright 2011, 7.

Luther's texts from the period of 1520 to 1530 have been read and systematically searched in relation to what they offer on the themes of bodiliness and gender. In particular, Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks's sourcebook *Luther on Women* has assisted me in this search by providing an overall view of Luther's writings concerning women—and thereby also men. As part of the process of surveying the sources, I have made systematic searches with such keywords as “body,” “flesh,” “woman,” and “man,” in the digitally edited form of the WA.<sup>43</sup> In addition, I have been guided by my own existing knowledge of the sources, supported by Master's thesis on a related theme.<sup>44</sup>

Answers to the main questions of the study are deciphered through two types of source material: roughly put, theoretical and practical material. In terms of Luther's theoretical writings, his sermons and treatises are of use. Equally important, however, is his correspondence, which is brought to bear throughout the study and makes it possible not only to examine Luther's theoretical viewpoints, but also to illuminate them in close connection with his everyday life. The different types of sources are compared in order to determine whether Luther's viewpoints were somehow differing from his theoretical, overall thinking and in practical situations.<sup>45</sup> Luther's table talks are left aside due to the time period under examination, since the first recorded table talks are from 1531 onwards.<sup>46</sup>

Due to the scope of this study, and also due to historical, political and social circumstances, many of Luther's writings concern the question of matrimony versus the cloister. This raises various considerations of human bodiliness, sexuality, and representations of manhood and womanhood, which are heavily loaded with Luther's emphases on the superiority and necessity of marital life. Arguably, these opinions affected the way in which Luther formulated his views. I shall take the foregoing carefully into account when estimating his statements. The key sources of the study are presented below.

The year 1520 has been chosen as the starting point of the study due to its significance from the viewpoint of both the source material and Luther's self-understanding. During 1520, when the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* threatening Luther with excommunication was imminent, Luther continued to formulate his ideas and he published his three major works. *To the Christian Nobility*<sup>47</sup> was published in

43 The material is located at <http://luther.chadwyck.co.uk>. The access to the web page is limited, however.

44 Mikkola 2007. The thesis discussed Luther's views on gender by comparing his thinking before and after his marriage; for the main part, two of his writings were under close scrutiny.

45 I have briefly discussed the tension between theory and practice in Luther's thinking in Mikkola 2015.

46 Drescher 1912, XXVI.

47 WA 6, 404–469. *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*. Henceforth referred to as *Christian Nobility*.

June, before Luther knew of the bull. *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*<sup>48</sup> was published in October and *On the Freedom of a Christian*<sup>49</sup> in November. The treatises show that Luther's rhetoric quite swiftly became more harsh after the bull was published in Electoral Saxony in September or October 1520.<sup>50</sup> He thus kept on formulating his theological views in the treatises, even when he was prohibited from preaching, publishing, or defending his writings and commanded to abstain from his errors, while his books were to be burned. His language began to alter visibly as he stepped into the public eye—a most exceptional act for a professor and an Augustinian friar. As Kaarlo Arffman has maintained, from 1520 onwards Luther presented himself as infallible and ranged against the pope from this position.<sup>51</sup> One can ask, however, if this self-understanding of infallibility developed as a result of historical events or if it could have been an inborn characteristic.<sup>52</sup> Be that as it may, the year of Luther's rapidly increasing public visibility begins the discussion.

The first years of the 1520s were altogether crucial in Luther's life. He not only wrote and published a swiftly growing amount of material, but was at the very center of public turmoil concerning spiritual as well as societal and political changes. Phenomena such as the growing demands around the debates of whether cloistered life or matrimony was the supreme way of life, the abandoning of the celibate life of secular and regular clerics, and the assertion of clerical marriage were at the center of many discussions.<sup>53</sup> All of these discourses began forcefully in the beginning of the 1520s, and they will be introduced in the main body of this text mainly through Luther's views.

*Das Magnificat, verdeutscht und ausgelegt*,<sup>54</sup> which Luther began to write in November 1520, is used as source material as well. An impetus for translating the *Magnificat* into German and commenting on the biblical text was young Duke John

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48 WA 6, 497–573. *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*. Henceforth referred to as *Babylonian Captivity*.

49 WA 7, 49–73. *Mar. Lutheri tractatus de libertate christiana*. Henceforth referred to as *Freedom of a Christian*. For the German version *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, see WA 7, 20–38. The original treatise was in Latin, but Luther translated it into German, and there are certain differences between the two texts. Schilling 2006, XVIII.

50 The bull was published in Electoral Saxony, as legal formalities required, by John Eck, who was not, however, present himself. Brecht 1985, 390–391, 394, 400; Hendrix 2009, IX.

51 Arffman 1981, 239–240.

52 I thank Professor Kaarlo Arffman for posing this interesting question, which as such would require a study of its own.

53 For debates concerning clerical marriage especially from the 1520s onward, see, e.g., Plummer 2012. For a wider historical continuum regarding clerical marriage, see, e.g., Parish 2010. For the dawn of the Reformation as an era of crisis, see, e.g., Lindberg 1983, 22–25.

54 StA 1, 314–364. Henceforth referred to as *Magnificat*. The newer edition of *Magnificat* from *Studienausgabe* is exploited, thus following the example of Anja Ghiselli, Th.D., whose specialized field is Mary in Luther's theology. The text can also be found in WA 7, 544–604.



Frederick (1503–1554),<sup>55</sup> to whom Luther dedicated the book in March 1521. The text was thus, as Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen has noted, a *Fürstenspiegel* that depicted Mary as the proper example for a Christian ruler.<sup>56</sup> Luther wrote the first third of the *Magnificat* in Wittenberg during November 1520. Due to the Diet of Worms, Luther had to interrupt the writing process, but he continued working in Wartburg, and the printers received the text in late August or early September 1521.<sup>57</sup> As Dr. Anja Ghiselli has noted, the *Magnificat* is Luther's only extensive work on the Virgin Mary. It is also one of the texts that Luther wrote in its entirety himself.<sup>58</sup>

While dwelling at Wartburg Castle, Luther also composed the treatise *On Monastic Vows*,<sup>59</sup> which is yet another important text for this study. The first edition of the treatise was printed in February 1522, and a second, revised edition after June 1522.<sup>60</sup> By March 1522, Luther had already conclusively left Wartburg.<sup>61</sup> Luther dedicated the treatise to his father by including a letter to him as a preface. The intention of the treatise was not a polemical one,<sup>62</sup> but it rather was “a guide to those who had already left or were thinking of leaving their monasteries and convents.”<sup>63</sup> Luther wanted to contribute by giving guidance to those who were leaving, so that they might act with a good conscience. In practice, Luther treated the issue of monastic vows from the viewpoint of their opposition to God's word, faith, Christian freedom, the first commandments, common sense, and reason.<sup>64</sup> In the treatise, Luther denied the value of cloistered life, and he rejected binding vows as well. Although *On Monastic Vows* has often been regarded in modern research as one of the most important reasons for the general rejection of cloister vows, Heiko Oberman has justly noted that it was published only after “escapes” from monasteries and convents had already begun to take place.<sup>65</sup>

The text not only served as guidance. It was also Luther's first lengthy public definition of policy directly in regard to the cloister and vows. The intended target audience of the treatise was primarily monks and nuns, as Luther himself explicat-

55 John Frederick was the son and the heir apparent of Elector John (the elector from 1525 until his death in 1532), who was, for his part, the brother and heir presumptive of Frederick the Wise.

56 Wiberg Pedersen 2015, 228.

57 Delius 1979, 312; Korsch 2012, 365.

58 Ghiselli 2005, 21.

59 WA 8, 573–669. *De votis monasticis Martini Lutheri iudicium*.

60 Kawerau 1889, 566; Atkinson 1966, 245–247.

61 Arffman 1985, 79; Hendrix 2015, 133. According to Arffman, the elector approved of Luther's return, although silently. It was, in fact, crucial from his point of view—he could best gain control over the popular movement with the help of Luther. Arffman 1985, 80.

62 Kawerau 1889, 564–565; Atkinson 1966, 247.

63 Atkinson 1966, 247.

64 Atkinson 1966, 247–249.

65 Oberman 2003, 60. I have also discussed the relationship between Luther's texts and the escapes in Mikkola 2014b.

ed, although the content of the treatise suggests that he mainly thought of monks when writing the text. In addition, Luther was certainly aware that other *literati*, which as a concept refers to those competent in Latin, had access to the printed treatise as well. I do not mean to suggest, however, that monks and nuns all were literate. Nor do I argue that the Latin texts were only available to those competent in that language. The border between a *litteratus* (a literate person) and an *illiteratus* (an illiterate person) is not a definite one, but nevertheless it has traditionally been drawn by modern scholars as the capability or incapability to read and write in Latin. Thus, *illiterati* were those who could read and write only in their vernacular. As Cheryl Glenn has noted, however, “the uncalibrated term *literati* indicated those schooled in Latin, regardless of individual expertise or accomplishment.”<sup>66</sup> The question of literacy is, on a whole, a complex one. Brian Stock importantly notes:

What was essential for a textual community, whether large or small, was simply a text, an interpreter, and a public. The text did not have to be written; oral record, memory, and reperformance sufficed. Nor did the public have to be fully lettered. Often, in fact, only the interpreter had a direct contact with literate culture...<sup>67</sup>

Reading, an essential part of the question of literacy, was thus not a unidimensional course of action.<sup>68</sup>

Cloister vows were not the only issue that required Luther’s attention after his return to Wittenberg.<sup>69</sup> While he had been gone, in parallel with more moderate measures to reform Wittenberg, extreme means of reform were also compelled by university teachers and the town council, of which Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486–1541)<sup>70</sup> was later made into the main culprit, along with Gabriel Zwilling (c. 1487–1558).<sup>71</sup> For a brief moment it looked as if leadership of the new movement was slipping out of Luther’s hands.<sup>72</sup> Luther did not disapprove of the furthering of the reform as such, but the compulsive way in which some had done

66 Glenn 1993, 498.

67 Stock 1984, 18. For the connection between literacy, reading, and orality, see also Ong 1984; 2015.

68 See Rublack 2005, 45–46 for a short discussion of reading.

69 For a lively portrayal of Wittenberg, see Rublack 2005, 16–19.

70 Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt is in the current standard usage called Andreas Karlstadt, after his hometown. Henceforth he will be called Andreas Karlstadt.

71 One main reason for making Karlstadt the guilty party was probably the lack of electoral confidence in him, as Kaarlo Arffman has suggested. Arffman 1985, 77. Hans-Jürgen Goertz, for instance, has paid attention to Karlstadt’s measures as more daring than the electoral court would have preferred. However, according to Goertz, Karlstadt acted in cooperation with his colleagues from the university, as well as with members of the town council. His reforms concerning the Mass occurred especially in Christmas 1521 in the Castle Church (*Schloßkirche*) and on New Year’s Day in the Town Church (*Stadtskirche*). Goertz 2007, 61. For a thorough investigation of Karlstadt and the events during winter 1521/1522, see Bubenheimer 1977.

72 Rublack 2005, 23–24. See also Lindberg 1996, 96.

it. To encourage people and to prevent the reform from falling into violent disturbances and disorder in Wittenberg and the neighboring areas, and to restore his position as the leader of the evangelical movement, Luther made, for example, a short preaching tour beginning in Wittenberg and ending in Torgau in the spring of 1522, preaching of patience and charity in relation to Christian life.<sup>73</sup>

By and large, during the year 1522 the reformer, who thus far had been the leading character in a relatively small opposition group, was becoming the authority concerning both the ecclesiastical and communal life of the German evangelical movement. Since spring 1522, Luther framed himself as the only proper leader of the evangelical movement, a charismatic teacher sent by God. However, this self-understanding had been developing at least from 1520.<sup>74</sup> Luther was generally held as an embodiment of the religious hopes of certain Germans since the Diet of Worms, and his image approached that of a medieval saint both in popular and literate discourse.<sup>75</sup> This direction is also validated by Luther's writings from 1522 onwards. The predominant apologetic genre of Luther's work, as it were, began to give way to also include written guidelines concerning the rearrangement of the societal and ecclesiastical spheres.<sup>76</sup>

Luther arguably became aware of the troubles of his contemporaries—also concerning marital issues—during his preaching tour of spring 1522, which led him to write on that subject as well.<sup>77</sup> Luther probably began to write the treatise *On Married Life*<sup>78</sup> in August 1522, and it came off the press in Wittenberg presumably at the end of September.<sup>79</sup> This text is highly important for this thesis and is used especially in Chapter III. Luther himself referred to the text as a sermon, but as Brandt has noted, “the introductory remarks are appropriate only to a treatise intended for the press, not to a sermon.”<sup>80</sup> However, this does not tell much about whether Luther did use one of his sermons as the basis of the treatise or not. Even when himself putting his sermons into writing, Luther did not regard it essential to hold to the form—or contents, for that matter—of the spoken sermon, but to make oneself more comprehensible (*sich ‘weyter zu vorcleren’*) by writing.<sup>81</sup> However, the possibility also exists of the treatise being an expanded version of a spoken sermon, even though there is no such sermon on the subject known from this period.<sup>82</sup>

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73 Brandt 1962, 13–15; Arffman 1985, 84; Mullett 2015, 182, 184.

74 Arffman 1981, 240; Arffman 1985, 92–93; Rublack 2005, 36; Hendrix 2009, 8.

75 Scribner 1981, 19–22. See also Boehmer 1951, 298.

76 See, for instance, *Schriften* in WA 12.

77 Mullett 2015, 184. See also Cortright 2011, 144.

78 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 275–304. *Vom Ehelichen Leben*.

79 Drescher 1907, 267; Brandt 1962, 14–15.

80 Brandt 1962, 15.

81 Pietsch 1895a, VIII–IX.

82 Drescher 1907, 268; Brandt 1962, 13–15; Brecht 1986, 95; Hendrix 2000, 338–339.

The definite reasons for publishing the treatise cannot be traced in detail, as Brandt has remarked.<sup>83</sup> Luther's own forewords describe that canon law—according to which marriage was one of the sacraments—and the lack of both proper spiritual and secular supervision had led to a series of pragmatic problems concerning marriage.<sup>84</sup> The contents of the treatise, dealing with marital relations through very practical examples and counsel, also imply that Luther's primary intention could well have been to offer advice for real-life situations. It is thus possible that the text was intended, for instance, as guidelines for secular clergy to deal with different kinds of problems regarding matrimony. Similarly, it is justified to assume that the treatise was not meant primarily for academic discourse, since it was written in the vernacular. Luther's choice of German as the language of the treatise also supports, by and large, the idea of a quite wide audience.

A text which is particularly interesting from the viewpoint of masculinity—and thus especially used in Chapter IV—is Luther's *Exhortation*<sup>85</sup> to the members of the Teutonic Order (*Deutscher Orden*). The representatives of the Teutonic Order approached Luther twice during 1523. The need to reform the Order primarily due to the political situation—namely, the Polish-Teutonic War in 1519–1521 and its aftermath with a search for allies—drove the Order's Grand Master Albert of Brandenburg (1490–1568) to consult Luther. Albert visited Luther himself in Wittenberg in November 1523, asking him to make suggestions for the improvement of the Order's Rule. Luther's response, which he presumably put into writing in December 1523, was to insist on the abandonment of the Rule and preference of matrimony instead.<sup>86</sup>

The year 1522 had been a starting point for quite an organized tradition of Luther's sermons, as it contains the greatest number of single printed sermons from any period. Respectively, the manuscript tradition—that is, the production of manuscripts written by Luther's audience—began in 1523.<sup>87</sup> A major collection of Luther's recorded sermons are his sermons, the *Reihenpredigten*<sup>88</sup> on Genesis, held from March 22, 1523 to September 18, 1524; of these, I have chosen to exploit merely the account of the events in the Garden of Eden, due to the need to limit material.

83 Brandt 1962, 14.

84 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 275.

85 WA 12, 232–244. *An die herrn Deutschs Ordens, das sie falsche keuscheyt meyden und zur rechten ehlichen keuscheyt greyffen Ermanung.*

86 Lambert & Brandt 1962, 134–138; Hendrix 2009, 8. For dating as well as the significance of the treatise, see Lambert & Brandt 1962, 138–139.

87 Pietsch 1895a, VII–VIII. For source criticism concerning the written sermons, see especially pp. VIII–XV.

88 *Reihenpredigten* refers to “the series of expository sermons Luther preached during his career using continuous readings (*lectio continua*) ... in the manner of a verse-by-verse exposition.” Cortright 2011, 56, 230. Gerhard Ebeling has noted that most of Luther's sermons were not *Reihenpredigten*, but rather sermons on individual biblical texts. See Ebeling 1991, 16.

The sermon manuscripts titled *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose gehalten 1523 und 1524* can be found in WA 14, 97a–450d. To what extent these manuscripts are consistent with Luther’s spoken sermons remains an unsolvable question.<sup>89</sup>

In this study, I use the printed German edition, *Über das erst buch Mose, predigete Mart. Luth. Sampt einer unterricht wie Moses zu leren ist*,<sup>90</sup> and the sermon manuscripts in tandem. Also available is a Latin edition, *In Genesin Mosi librum sanctissimum D. Martini Lutheri Declamationes*.<sup>91</sup> The reason for using the German edition is that Luther himself approved it more readily than the Latin edition.<sup>92</sup> Some scholars, such as Susan Karant-Nunn and Johannes Schwanke, have treated WA 24 as a distinct series of *Sermons on Genesis*, rather than explicating that they are the 1527 printed version of sermons given in 1523 and 1524.<sup>93</sup> Of course, the differences between the sermon manuscripts and the printed texts are obvious.<sup>94</sup> However, in this study I make a serious effort to ensure that the printed version of the passages that are cited correlates with what Luther may have said in 1523–1524. Therefore, every citation of *Sermons on Genesis* is accompanied by a reference to both WA 14 and 24. When the wording is perfectly the same in both of the texts, the passage of WA 24 is put first in the footnote and the one from WA 14 is put next in parentheses. If the wordings are somewhat similar, the passage of WA 24 is again put first, but WA 14 is noted as “Similarly...”

The audience of the original, spoken sermons cannot be straightforwardly regarded as the same as the public reading the text. It is probable that the public from different social classes had access to the German text in particular, at least in Wittenberg, where only the German edition, not the Latin one, was printed.<sup>95</sup> Thus, the audience of the German edition likely consisted of various groups of people in terms of literacy, class, and gender.

The year 1525 was in many ways a turning point for Luther and the evangelical movement. Albrecht Beutel, for instance, has even maintained that 1525 was “a deep caesura” for Luther personally.<sup>96</sup> His supporter Frederick the Wise died on May 5, 1525, and his brother John (1468–1532)<sup>97</sup>—who was also favorable toward Luther—succeeded him as the Elector of Saxony.<sup>98</sup> During the summerti-

89 For this question, see Pietsch 1895a, VIII–XV; and the introduction to the sermons in Pietsch 1895b, 92–95. For the reason why Luther preached on Genesis, see Cortright 2011, 95–96.

90 WA 24, 1b–710b. Henceforth referred to as the Sermons on Genesis.

91 WA 24, 1a–710a.

92 Pietsch 1900, xiv.

93 See Karant-Nunn 2008, 171, fn.15; Schwanke 2004, 78, fn.2.

94 See, e.g., Cortright 2011, 112, fn.67.

95 Pietsch 1900, XVI.

96 Beutel 2003, 14.

97 Also known as John the Steadfast (*Johann der Beständige*). He was the elector of Saxony from 1525 until his death in 1532.

98 NDB 1961, 568; NDB 1974, 524; Hendrix 2015, 155; Mullett 2015, 212.

me of 1524, the Peasants' Revolt—which saw the participation of citizens as well as peasants<sup>99</sup>—was suppressed by force in 1525. The Revolt did not really touch Luther until the spring of 1525, and he aligned himself with the upper class as he began to stress more and more explicitly the vital role of rulers in establishing the evangelical faith in German territories.<sup>100</sup> As Charlotte Methuen has aptly pointed out, “Luther’s reading of the gospel might be radical in its rejection of distinctions between the spiritual and the temporal, but it did not imply the entire reordering of society.”<sup>101</sup> The notion of tension between Luther’s interpretations of Christian life in theory and in practice is of great importance for this thesis, and it will be scrutinized along the way.

One of the key texts of the study from the end part of the 1520s is a sermon called *Marital Estate*,<sup>102</sup> which was given by Luther in the beginning of 1525—arguably on January 15, 1525, as the epistle text was about the wedding at Cana (John 2).<sup>103</sup> The second Sunday of January was traditionally the day to preach in favor of marriage, and Luther followed this tradition throughout his life. The pericope mentioned above was in his use most commonly on these Sundays—and it was in fact maintained later in the liturgical calendar of his followers as well.<sup>104</sup>

Luther’s own *Sitz im Leben* changed greatly during the summer months of 1525 when he married Katharina von Bora (1499–1552) on June 13.<sup>105</sup> Of the six children that the Luthers had, three were born during the time frame that this thesis covers. Luther’s first-born son Johannes, or Hans as he was often called, was born in June 1526. Luther’s daughter Elisabeth was born a year and a half later in December 1527, but died in infancy when only eight months old in August 1528. Magdalena, their third child, was born the following spring.<sup>106</sup> Luther’s letters concerning the marriage, von Bora herself, and their children are of great value for this study.

Since Luther’s correspondence is closely examined throughout the study, a few words must be said about letters as source material in general. In modern scholarship, letters are commonly labeled and treated either as *Selbstzeugnisse* or ego-documents. The notion of a *Selbstzeugnis*—that is, a “self-narrative” or “testimony to the self”—is especially employed in German scholarship, and the concept dates back as far as the

99 Lindberg 1996, 158–160; Rublack 2005, 27. The most active phase of the uprising was between February and May 1525. Lindberg 1996, 159.

100 Methuen 2014, 18–19. See also Rublack 2005, 27–29. The Peasants’ Revolt had been smoldering for quite a long period of time; see Brecht 1986, 172.

101 Methuen 2014, 19. See also Beutel 2003, 14.

102 WA 17I, 12–29. *Eine predigt vom Ehestand*.

103 WA 17I, 12; Drescher 1907, XIX.

104 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 5.

105 For biographies of von Bora, see, e.g., Bainton 1971, 23–44; Winter 1990; Markwald & Markwald 2002; Stjerna 2009, 51–70. Jeanette C. Smith has evaluated the scholarship around von Bora from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in her article; see Smith 1999.

106 Methuen 2014, 24.

nineteenth century.<sup>107</sup> The idea of an “ego-document” was first used in the 1950s by the Dutch historian Jacques Presser (1899–1970), who employed the concept to describe texts wherein the writer explicated her/his thoughts, emotions, and actions.<sup>108</sup>

In the context of the Late Middle Ages and the Reformation era, letters were rather strictly regulated. The art of letter writing (*ars dictaminis* or *ars dictandi*) had begun to develop particularly from the eleventh century onwards, and it was quite commonly taught in cathedral and monastic schools and universities by the Late Middle Ages.<sup>109</sup> The form of letters was adopted from the rhetoric of the classical period and, accordingly, they were divided into an opening section (*exordium*), narration (*narratio*), argumentation (*argumentatio*), and conclusion (*conclusio*). The formality of letters was deemed as highly important not only in official letters used in political decision-making, but also in private correspondence.<sup>110</sup>

It is rather complex, however, to define the borderline between public and private letters during the late medieval period and the Early Modern Era.<sup>111</sup> In general, both were usually quite tactical in nature—the authors had a specific aim to affect other people and the course of events. Letters were written, for example, to announce the specific actions of the author before he or she had executed those very actions.<sup>112</sup> Letters thus not only described reality, but also aimed to construct it through discursive means.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, letters were usually directed at the named recipient, but also others; indeed, they were often read aloud and circulated. Lyndal Roper has remarked that Luther assumed that his letters would be read in wider circles than by the actual recipients.<sup>114</sup>

The letter was a standardized form that, above all, “reinforced notions of social hierarchy,” as Dr. Les Perelman writes.<sup>115</sup> The ways in which the medieval

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107 Fulbrook & Rublack 2010, 263.

108 Dekker 2002, 7–9. Memoirs, diaries, autobiographies, and chronicles are also regarded as ego-documents. Jancke & Ulbrich 2005, 10. As Rudolf Dekker has noted, some scholars also deem curriculum vitae to be ego-documents. Dekker 2002, 9. The usage of the concept has been problematized for several reasons. See, e.g., Dekker 2002, 15–19; Fulbrook & Rublack 2010, 264–265; von Greyerz 2010, 278.

109 Perelman 1991, 102; Chartier 1997, 21–22. Malcom Richardson maintains that the golden era of European dictaminal works was the period from the beginning of the twelfth century all the way to the end of the fourteenth century. Richardson 2007, 52.

110 Boureau 1997, 36, 45, 51.

111 Koskinen 2005, 239. Or, for that matter, it is difficult to draw a line between private and public in general. Gerle 2015, 35, 52.

112 Roper 2010, 284.

113 This is, by and large, the central idea of the linguistic turn. See, e.g., Canning 1994, 369–370; Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 8.

114 Roper 2010a, 284–286. Roper has proved in this particular article that Luther’s personal letters to Georg Spalatin were considerably affected by the current religious-political situation, and they were aimed at influencing—if not even manipulating—him.

115 Perelman 1991, 102.

manuals of letter writing depicted possible methods of influence were drawn, yet again, from classical rhetoric. The medieval art of letter writing presumed that the writer should first and foremost be concerned with the rank of the person to whom he/she was writing. Dictaminal works, which for the most part included instructions for proper salutations (*salutatio*), held that the recipient should be flattered and, respectively, the sender should express his/her humbleness in order to take social hierarchy into account and to win the recipient's favor in regard to the contents of the letter. Especially the salutations were expected to be formal and respectful. Thus, persuasion was employed in the letter from the very beginning all the way to the signature at the end.<sup>116</sup>

The aim of the writer was often to lead the reader to interpret the text one way or the other, according to the writer's wishes.<sup>117</sup> Hence, there are various critical issues concerning the study of *Selbstzeugnis* or ego-documents such as letters: the writer may have consciously or unconsciously left crucial details out of the text, she may have altered her story, or she may have even rewritten the text later.<sup>118</sup> Lyndal Roper emphasizes this aspect in relation to Luther's letters:

If Luther's letters are ego-documents, they are not transparent windows onto his soul, still less unproblematic sources for a Reformation narrative. Always carefully crafted and mostly written with an eye to a public beyond the ostensible correspondent, Luther's letters were strategic masterpieces. We can learn almost as much from what Luther forgets and omits, and from his silences, as we can from what he says.<sup>119</sup>

When using correspondence as source material, it is thus crucial to carefully take the motives of the letter writer into account, for they can be quite complex. Letters as texts should not be taken at face value—that is, as objective descriptions—but as subjective experiences of reality. Accordingly, this study is not so much interested in the *wie es eigentlich gewesen* (“how it actually happened”) formulation by Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), which was later debated by historians,<sup>120</sup> as much as Luther's discursive means of making his point on issues concerning womanhood and manhood. Of course, this also applies to other types of texts used in this study.

From the end of the 1520s, Luther's sermons are used as source material, as well as his *Large Catechism* and *Small Catechism*.<sup>121</sup> An important part of the *Small Catechism*, albeit its being originally an individual text, is his *Booklet of Ad-*

116 Perelman 1991, 102, 110–111; Koskinen 2005, 239–241.

117 Fulbrook & Rublack 2010, 267; Salmesvuori 2013, 45.

118 von Greyerz 2010, 278.

119 Roper 2010a, 294.

120 Sometimes scholars are still drawn to the idea of grasping at the past “as it was,” as impossible as that is. For Leopold von Ranke's views, see, e.g., Rüsen 1990; Kalela 2002, 50–51. For a contribution that questions the caricature of Ranke, see, e.g., Pieters 2000, 24.

121 WA 30I, 125–238. *Deudsch Catechismus (Der Große Katechismus)*; WA 30I, 265a–345a. *Enchiridion. Der kleine Catechismus fuer die gemeine Pfarher und Prediger*.



*vice for Simple Pastors*, which was composed in 1529.<sup>122</sup> Throughout the 1520s, it had remained somewhat unclear for both pastors and the populace exactly which parts of canon law and the earlier practices could be maintained. The more the gap between Catholics and evangelicals deepened, the more the latter had to consider the basis for their practices, both ecclesiastical and civil.<sup>123</sup>

All in all, the situation was difficult. For one, the secular authorities were hesitant to officially assume marriage jurisdiction during the 1520s. As Joel Harrington has pointed out, in multiple cities affected by the evangelical teaching the bishop's jurisdiction was in practice acknowledged until the 1530s—even though their “magisterial and pastoral authority” was otherwise contested. Indeed, Harrington has even described the situation in many evangelical areas as “marital chaos.”<sup>124</sup> The need for new marital treatises—as discussed above, Luther had composed *On Married Life* already in 1522—was due to the changed societal situation of the late 1520s.

The *Booklet of Advice* offers a marriage formula for evangelical pastors' use in a situation where there were hardly any common guidelines for the practice of marrying. The last key text of the study, the treatise *On Marriage Matters*<sup>125</sup> from 1530, was written for a very similar need. Luther had begun composing the text already in September 1529 and he worked on it until January 1530.<sup>126</sup> In the case of this text, Luther was asked by two pastors, whose identity cannot be traced, to give his advice particularly concerning the themes of secret engagement and divorce.<sup>127</sup> Thus, when common people asked for advice from their pastors or whichever authority they could think of,<sup>128</sup> it was merely logical that the pastors turned on their behalf to authorities such as Luther himself.

In the treatise, Luther formulated principles of a practical nature on which pastors could lean when faced with these questions, as Robert Schultz has maintained; thus, his intention was “not to assume the role of legislator.”<sup>129</sup> However, according to Paul Hinlicky, *On Marriage Matters* is expressly a “legal treatise” and “nothing but an extended and detailed plea for public recognition and legal protection of marriage...”<sup>130</sup> Sieghard Mühlmann has also evaluated that Luther's self-understanding in this particular text is that of an expert from whom people asked

122 WA 30III, 74–80. *Ein Traubüchlein für die einfältigen Pfarrherrn*.

123 Schultz 1967, 261. Cortright has maintained that *On Married Life* was written for a similar need. Cortright 2011, 144–145.

124 Harrington 2005, 134–136. For a table of the period from the rejection of clerical celibacy until the first complete marriage ordinance in different evangelical and reformed areas, see Harrington 2005, 138.

125 WA 30III, 205–248. *Von Ehesachen*.

126 Schultz 1967, 263; Mühlmann 1986, 260.

127 See WA 30III, 205; Mühlmann 1986, 259.

128 Harrington 2005, 136–137.

129 Schultz 1967, 262–263.

130 Hinlicky 2010, 193.

advice, and even more so that of an authority especially at home in the sphere of legal specialists.<sup>131</sup> Given the chaotic situation around the jurisdiction of marital issues, Luther's appearance as somewhat of a legal expert seems understandable.

The year 1530 is the end point of the time period under study. The reason for this particular choice is, first, that the cases examined in the last chapter reach up to that year. The second reason is related to the first one, as well as to the chronological approach of this study: it would not have been justifiable to compare the case studies with theoretical texts from later years—as that would have meant potentially making teleological deductions.<sup>132</sup> The third reason is that other texts would hardly alter or challenge the picture that the chosen texts up to 1530 offer on Luther's views. The next logical step would most obviously be to take the *Lectures on Genesis* into account, but as has been noted earlier, they cover the time phase from 1535 onward and thus would excessively extend the time frame of the dissertation. The fourth and last reason is perhaps the least connected to the viewpoint of this thesis as such, yet remains a valid one from my point of view. Namely, the year 1530 can be regarded as the end point of the middle phase—controversial but not yet confessional—of Luther's life.<sup>133</sup>

The structure of the study is thematic, yet it follows loose chronology. In practice, the study is divided into five main chapters. Chapter II: *Life in the Flesh—A Premise for Both Sexes* analyzes the starting points of Luther's discussion of gender. The shades of meaning of the central concepts, such as the body and flesh, are studied in this chapter, which leads, in a sense, into the whole study. The common premises of the bodily lives of both men and women are depicted as well. The emphasis of this chapter is on inevitable bodily needs and on Luther's discussion regarding ways to control those needs. Chapter III: *Construction of the Female Body and Femininity* emphasizes the significance of the feminine body as the basis for Luther's deciphering of the way of being of women and their proper roles in society. Chapter IV: *Construction of the Male Body and Masculinity* discusses Luther's ideals and norms concerning men. By and large, it takes into account the norms that Luther tended to assign to men in general, but it also specifically sheds light, for instance, on the way that Luther treated his own masculinity and way of being. Chapters III and IV examine not only Luther's theoretical texts—although the main emphasis is on these—but also his contemporaries, both women and men, via his correspondence.

Chapters V and VI concentrate even more on a comparison of Luther's theoretical and practical viewpoints, discussing his way of constructing gender

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131 Mühlmann 1986, 259.

132 For the same reasoning, see Salmesvuori 2014, 22.

133 See, e.g., Hendrix 2009, 8; Methuen 2014, 18.

and the gender system through real-life situations. These two chapters are built around case studies, but Luther's theoretical texts (especially from the late 1520s) are also discussed vis-à-vis the practical cases. His earlier views, examined in previous chapters, are taken into account as well. In this way, it is possible to determine if and how his language and thought concerning the body, gendered ways of being, and the gender system differed in theory and practice.

Chapter V: *Bodiliness and the Reconstruction of Gender in the Luther Marriage* deciphers Luther's masculinity, but also von Bora's femininity. In addition to Luther's relationship with his wife, the impact of fatherhood on him is considered. It is not often that Luther is examined through a scrutinizing of the meanings he gave to fatherhood or by asking how his way of being a man was affected by this particular role.<sup>134</sup> The chapter seeks to contribute to this lacuna. Chapter VI: *Because of or Despite the Gendered body? Rules and Exceptions among Luther's Contemporaries* continues with issues concerning the proper way of being for women as wives and mothers and men as husbands and fathers. The chapter studies three cases involving Luther's friends and colleagues; described and analyzed are his views on the relations of Elisabeth and John Agricola, Katharina and Justus Jonas, and Ursula and Stephan Roth. The possibility to follow Luther's reasoning about couples in different situations in life is particularly valuable from the viewpoint of the gender system. Each chapter ends with a short summary of the most important findings.

All in all, 35 sermons and treatises and about a hundred letters are used in the study. Twenty-two sermons and treatises from the first half of the 1520s are examined, compared to thirteen from the latter half of the decade. The letters cover the whole of the 1520s as well, although their analysis is accentuated in the last two, chronologically sequential chapters. About thirty letters are used in the first three chapters, and approximately seventy in the next two. Of course, the use of the source material differs according to the specific themes of the respective chapters. Thus, for instance, the use of Luther's correspondence plays a more significant role in chapters concentrated on an analysis of if and how Luther applied his overall views to the lives of his contemporaries. The structure of the work and the sources that are chosen allow a fruitful and balanced view to Luther's gendered anthropology, and they enable the making of proper comparisons between different genres of texts.

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134 Sari Katajala-Peltomaa has arrived at a largely similar notion of the scholarship concerning medieval masculinity. This lack is surprising in a sense, as fatherhood is "one of the most intimate aspects of masculine identity and an essential element in men's social roles..." Katajala-Peltomaa 2013, 223. Susan Karant-Nunn has examined Luther's fatherhood, but within a later time frame than the one this study covers. In addition, she has mostly used Luther's Table Talks as source material; it is not exploited in this study, as noted formerly. Thus, there is hardly any overlap between her study and mine. See Karant-Nunn 2012b.

### 3. METHODS, THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND CENTRAL CONCEPTS

The study is interdisciplinary and combines the approaches of church history, history of ideas, gender studies, and systematic theology. The predominant approach is a historical one, however, and it is applied by taking the historical context into account throughout the analyses and by deciphering possible changes in Luther's views due to various situations. Methodologically, the texts are examined by a close reading and content analysis to discuss both the explicit and the implicit levels of Luther's discussions. In practice, a close reading and content analysis mean, on the one hand, that central concepts such as the body are analyzed from the viewpoint of their contents in differing texts and contexts. On the other hand, Luther's manner of argumentation and the actual content of what he says are also closely scrutinized.

At times, Luther's views on femininity, masculinity, and gendered bodiliness are found only as implicit. Implicit refers, obviously, to those things that remain between the lines in the texts. As Elisabeth Gerle has maintained: "It is not rare that it [Luther's views on the human body, sexuality, and the erotic] is something that comes in sight in between [i.e. between the lines], there where it is not said but is in present as a matter-of-course, or as something that comes up in the practical life..."<sup>135</sup> This study maintains a focus on the themes of bodiliness, gender, and the gender system that 1) are openly discussed by Luther and deemed, for instance, as natural, normative or praiseworthy, on the one hand, or as abnormal, shameful, or punishable, on the other; and dimensions of gender and sexuality that 2) are not explicated in the text but implicitly present in Luther's way of discussing the themes and creating boundaries between normal/abnormal, rule/exception, and acceptable/forbidden.<sup>136</sup> While keeping an eye on norms and transgressions, for example, Luther's context is taken into account at all times.

Many of the key concepts of the study—such as the gender system, power, authority, and otherness—have been adopted especially from gender studies, which, as a field of study, has greatly informed my thinking. The terms *sex* and *gender*—used frequently in this study—have featured prominently in feminist scholarly discussions since the 1970s. The cultural anthropologist Gayle Rubin was amongst the first feminist academics in 1975 to use the idea of sex/gender system in her widely known essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex."<sup>137</sup> The philosopher Judith Butler has also been one of the most

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135 Gerle 2015, 26, 45.

136 This way of looking into the sources has its inspiration in the queer method. For queering, see, e.g., Lochrie 1991; 2005; Burger & Kruger 2001; Hollywood 2001; Wilsbacher 2003; Brady 2006; Rydström 2008.

137 Rubin 1997.

influential feminist thinkers to work with the concepts, for instance, in her *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."*<sup>138</sup> She strongly criticized "sex" as a reference to biological sex and "gender" as the term for socially constructed sex, as these terms were most commonly viewed before her. She maintained that

...if gender is the social significance that sex assumes within a given culture ... then what, if anything, is left of "sex" once it has assumed its social character as "gender"? ... When the sex/gender distinction is joined with a notion of radical linguistic construction, the problem becomes even worse, for the "sex" which is referred to as prior to gender will itself be a postulation, a construction, offered within language, as that which is prior to language, to construction.<sup>139</sup>

Criticizing scholars that emphasize the idea of cultural construction of body and gender, Reformation scholar Lyndal Roper has, for her part, noted that bodies are not merely cultural constructions but are factually and physically extant entities as well.<sup>140</sup>

Summing up the feminist discussion in her classical study *Gender and the Politics of History*,<sup>141</sup> Joan Wallach Scott sketches six basic questions posed by the term "gender":

...how and under what conditions different roles and functions had been defined for each sex; how the very meanings of the categories "man" and "woman" varied according to time and place; how regulatory norms of sexual deportment were created and enforced; how issues of power and rights played into questions of masculinity and femininity; how symbolic structures affected the lives and practices of ordinary people; how sexual identities were forged within and against social prescriptions.<sup>142</sup>

She herself has maintained a twofold characterization of gender: "gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."<sup>143</sup> Of course, interpretations of gender are always affected by the historical situation as well.<sup>144</sup> However, Scott's notions bring the terms "sex," "gender," and "power" together well, pointing out that they must be seen as different sides of the same thing: each term contributes to studying the human being as a bodily, sexual being who is always part of different power structures, social relations, and linguistic negotiations. Scott's formulations of the central questions concerning gender have been fundamental for this thesis.

Instead of making primary use of concepts such as "gender role" and the like, the study aims to use conceptualization that takes into account the body-ba-

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138 Butler 1993. For classical texts concerning the subject, see also e.g. Scott 1999.

139 Ibid., 5.

140 Roper 2012, 7. See also Gerle's suggestion of "the materialist turn"; Gerle 2015, 85.

141 Scott 1999. This is a revised edition, as the original was published in 1988.

142 Ibid., xi.

143 Ibid., 42.

144 Rublack 2002, 1.

sed, gendered language of Luther but which, at the same time, brings forth the intertwined nature of biological, social, cultural, and contextual dimensions of femininity and masculinity in his language. Thus, the study has been theoretically inspired the most by the Finnish philosopher Sara Heinämaa and her discussions on gender from the viewpoint of body-phenomenology.<sup>145</sup> Accordingly, I have chosen to use the concept of gendered *way of being* in the study. From my point of view, Heinämaa has managed to theorize gender in a way that brings together best the former discussions within gender studies and takes seriously both the organic or anatomical side and the constructed side of gender. Heinämaa thinks that gender itself is a philosophical problem, since the philosophical questions concerning body, meaning, doing, and being are connected to it in such an integral way. Therefore, as Heinämaa puts it, “The question of gender – the question of the difference between women and men – does not end to the discussion on ‘social relations’, ‘anatomical facts’, and ‘biological processes’ but only begins from here.”<sup>146</sup> From these remarks, which by the way are quite commonly cited in gender studies today, she outlines a way to understand gender by examining the body-phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the discussion of Simone de Beauvoir in her treatise *The Second Sex*.<sup>147</sup>

Heinämaa’s central conclusion is that it is not possible to define *what* is a woman or a man. Instead, it is possible to define a gendered style or a way of being, that is, to decipher *how to be* a woman or a man. If considered as a style or a way of being, gender can thus be understood as open and dynamic by nature. This particular way of rethinking gender includes the rethinking of difference. First, the gender difference between women and men can more easily be seen as something greater than a biological difference in terms of organs or bodily functions; indeed, gender difference becomes realized also in language, thoughts, spaces, and objects, for instance. Second, the idea of style or way of being allows us to see differences among women or among men. Accordingly, as Heinämaa maintains, it is possible to allow for differences in anatomy, experience, and actions, for instance, between different representatives of the same sex.<sup>148</sup>

Third, styles or ways of being that cannot be easily defined as feminine or masculine but are something in between can be examined without the need to bring forward an idea of, for example, a third gender. Rather, these styles can be taken as points of blending or dispersion.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, as Heinämaa aptly describes,

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145 Heinämaa 1996. See also, for instance, Heinämaa 2000.

146 Ibid., 174.

147 Heinämaa 1996, 9. The two volumes of de Beauvoir’s treatise were originally published in French in 1949 under the title *Le deuxième sexe*.

148 Ibid., 160–161.

149 Ibid., 161–162.

“Gender is not of essential nature or even a permanent norm, which is realized, or offended against, by sexual actions. It [gender] is a development of a norm, and singular actions are its adaptations or developments. They drive forward the style of a binary gender [system] but are also able to disrupt it [the binary system].”<sup>150</sup>

Thus, the idea of a way of being offers a prolific framework to study Luther’s views on how to be a woman or a man, which qualities Luther excludes from proper feminine and masculine ways of being, what kinds of variations and possible changes different contextual factors produce, and what the connection is between the body, actions, emotions, and thoughts, for instance. The idea of a gendered way of being also allows one to take Luther’s historical context seriously: it does not submit a theoretical or conceptual basis which would frame questions that are ahistorical or otherwise problematic to the context of the sixteenth century.

In discussing gender, the concept *gender system* is used as one of the most central terms of the study.<sup>151</sup> The gender system is understood in this thesis as a structure that recreates and maintains gendered dichotomies and hierarchies, wherein male is deemed as normative. By using the term “gender system,” it is possible to examine, for instance, what kinds of distribution of work or hierarchical relations between the sexes are prevailing in a certain time and place. Dichotomies concern, for example, representations of femininity and masculinity as opposing yet complementary. The concept thus refers to a structure that creates power relations by creating gendered meanings for different phenomena.<sup>152</sup> The gender system is, however, not static by nature but always bound to a certain historical situation, time and place, which makes it dynamic and pourous, as it were. This means that the reconstruction, or making the gender system, as in the headline of the study, is continuously in progress by individuals and groups of people alike.

Furthermore, the concept *otherness* is an integral part of discussing the gender system. Simone de Beauvoir has noted in *The Second Sex* that the relationship between man and woman has been and is regarded as asymmetrical, with man representing the positive as well as neutral characteristics of the human being.<sup>153</sup> Within this discourse, advocated by male thinkers and writers, “He [the man] is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she [the woman] is the Other.”<sup>154</sup> Although de Beauvoir, along with several modern feminist thinkers, has questioned the very foundations of this understanding, the passage aptly reflects both the explicit and

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150 Ibid., 162.

151 The equivalent for the gender system is gender order, applied by, for instance, Linda Woodhead in Woodhead 2007.

152 Liljeström 2004, 122. Liljeström is especially referring to Yvonne Hirdman’s view of the gender system.

153 de Beauvoir 1988, 15.

154 Ibid., 16.

the implicit level of discourse among late medieval and early modern male thinkers, including Luther. Retelling the view of de Beauvoir, this study refers by otherness to a relation in which one (the man) holds the power to define the other (the woman). This brings us to the next central concepts of the thesis.

*Power, authority, and dominance*—terms frequently used in this study—are much discussed, defined, and redefined within various fields of modern research. This study somewhat follows the viewpoints of one of the most influential thinkers regarding structures of power, namely, Michel Foucault. Foucault has stated, “The exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain action modify others. ... Power exists only when it is put into action...”<sup>155</sup> Thus, power as a “mode of action” is a way of responding to acts by others.<sup>156</sup> In Foucauldian understanding, power can be interpreted as an omnipresent part of all human interplay, which always requires liberty on the part of the parties involved in power relations. Power itself refers to an “unstable and reversible” structure of actions between free parties.<sup>157</sup> Power can thus be used only over persons who have the possibility to make choices, and the aim of power is thereby to affect those very choices.<sup>158</sup> Hence, according to Foucault, power relationships are “strategic games between liberties – strategic games that result in the fact that some people try to determine the conduct of others...”<sup>159</sup> Professor Amy Allen approaches a similar kind of understanding of power as distinct from domination by pointing out that “it is not clear that all relationships in which an individual has power over another are necessarily oppressive.”<sup>160</sup> In this study, power and authority refer to a person’s capability to affect others’ conduct with her actions or words.<sup>161</sup> Thus, it is assumed that the use of power is always linked to discourses as well.

On the other hand, domination is a subspecies of power relationships, and it is asymmetrical by nature. Domination is defined as a stable and hierarchical relation, a subordination, in which the subordinated does not have much in the way of real possibilities other than those dictated to her. However, Foucault insists that even in the relation of domination, in which the possessor of power can claim to have “all power over the other,” a certain amount of resistance remains possible.

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155 Foucault 1982, 788.

156 Ibid., 789.

157 Foucault 1988, 12; Hindess 1996, 97, 100.

158 Hindess 1996, 100.

159 Foucault 1988, 19.

160 Allen 1996, 267. However, Allen does use the terms “power” and “domination” as equivalents in her essay by defining power as “an oppressive power-over relation.” In another context, she nevertheless treats domination as one subspecies of power-over. See Allen 1998.

161 I thus have a similar starting point in this regard, compared to Salmesvuori 2014, 9.



Relations of power, even when they are dominating by nature, do not exist if there is no freedom to act contrary to the one trying to exert influence or coercion.<sup>162</sup>

Not all central concepts of the thesis have to do with gender studies, however. To end this section, I shall bring forward a few of the most important ones. Throughout the text, *Germany* refers to the *Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation* (Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation), which at its greatest included parts of modern Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, eastern France, northern Italy, Estonia, Latvia, and western Poland. It included a complex set of different languages, areas, and administrative solutions; to borrow Ulinka Rublack's words, it was a "strange political entity." It consisted of free imperial cities such as Strasbourg and Augsburg, which were directly under the governance of the Emperor, and territories ruled either by a prince or a bishop.<sup>163</sup> By the 1520s, Germany was "nothing more than a scattered and constantly changing network of political prerogatives," as Professor Kaarlo Arffman has noted.<sup>164</sup>

To refer to the movement started by Luther and his co-workers, the term *evangelical* instead of *protestant* will be used. The term "protestant" gained ground in 1529 after the Diet of Speyer. During the Diet, the evangelical side composed a written, formal protest wherein they refused, for instance, to "tolerate the Roman mass in its pre-reformation form."<sup>165</sup> However, the concept was not in use during the 1520s, and thus it is not made use of in this study either. The same policy is applied in quite recent texts by Marjorie Plummer and Vincent Evener.<sup>166</sup>

During the 1520s, contemporaries could call Luther's allies and followers "Martinianer" or "Lutheran" (*Lutherisch*), but these terms were heavily colored. They could be used in the most pejorative sense by Luther's opponents or to create group-identity among Luther's proponents.<sup>167</sup> The term "evangelical" (*Euangelisch*) was used by Luther himself, for instance, in various contexts.<sup>168</sup> In my view, these reasons make it the most suitable one to use in this study.<sup>169</sup> At times, the concept *evangelical-leaning* is also employed. Adopted from Marjorie Plummer's study, it

162 Foucault 1988, 12; Hindess 1996, 97, 102.

163 Rublack 2005, 6. See also Rublack 2002, 1.

164 Arffman 1996, 22.

165 Hendrix 2015, 204. See also Beutel 2003, 17.

166 Plummer 2012; Evener 2015 (see esp. fn.2).

167 On the pejorative usage of the concepts, see, e.g., AG 2010 (1523–24), 121; Plummer 2012, 86. On their use to form a group-identity, see, e.g., Brecht 1993, 352; Moeller 2001, 83, 260; Todd 2002, 57.

168 See, e.g., WA 7, 244, 646; WA 9, 286; 10<sup>1</sup>, 34 *et passim*.

169 The term "Lutheran" could justifiably be used from 1525 onwards, as the internal conflicts of the evangelical movement split its proponents into Lutherans and Zwinglians. Since the division is not significant for this study, however, I will use term "evangelical" throughout the study for the sake of clarity.

aptly describes a person who has become influenced by the evangelical interpretation of the Bible—and, indeed, of faith.<sup>170</sup> Consequently, the study does not speak of the Reformation, but rather the *evangelical movement* (or *movements* in the plural). *Anthropology* and *idea of the human being* are used as synonyms.

#### 4. A NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS AND SPELLINGS

All of the translations are done by the author unless otherwise noted. To begin with, however, the distinction between translations of the words man, woman, and human being needs to be clarified. As a speaker of the Germanic languages, Luther himself commonly used the masculine term *Mann* (or *Man*), as well as *Mensch* in some contexts when speaking about human beings. *Mann* was, of course, used when speaking of man specifically. *Weib* (or *weyb*) was used both for women in general and wives in particular. In Latin texts, Luther most commonly used the word *homo* for human beings.

When human beings as both women and men are discussed in this study, the term “human being” is always applied. Luther’s original expression is noted if essential to the discussion. Accordingly, in this dissertation the word “man” always refers to men as representatives of the male sex, not human beings in general. It goes without saying, then, that the word “woman” likewise refers to women as representatives of the female sex. Men are often referred to as *Hausväter* as well in the study. I regard the German term *Hausvater* as a comprehensive expression to describe a father, husband, and the head of the household, and therefore I use it as such in the body of the text. In Luther’s time, *Hausvater* was a commonly used word in practical everyday parlance, especially when it related to religious issues, whereas *Hausherr* was used more as a legal term.<sup>171</sup> Luther himself used the former term frequently in his writings. Several scholars have chosen to use the corresponding Latin expression *pater familias*. In the case of individual persons or places, I have used the current Standard English form of the names if available (e.g., Frederick instead of Friedrich) or alternatively made use of the established practice of a certain name (e.g., Katharina von Bora instead of Catharina von Bora).

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170 See, e.g., Plummer 2012, 89.

171 The concepts are, however, often used as synonyms in modern research. See, e.g., van Dülmen 2005, 37–45 *et passim*.; Hendrix 2008, 72, 83 (the English “housefather” is used instead of *Hausvater*); Jähnichen 2015, 231.

## II LIFE IN THE FLESH—A PREMISE FOR BOTH SEXES

### 1. DIVERSITY OF LUTHER'S BODY-TALK

The analysis below will explore the meanings that the body and flesh gained in Luther's language during the first years of the 1520s. Rather than analyzing each and every appearance of these concepts in the texts under review, representative examples are used to show how differently Luther could and did use them. The aim of this chapter is to stress the vital role of concepts of the body in Luther's discussion of the human being.

The following sections decipher the relations between the concepts of spirit, soul, the body, and flesh in Luther's use—concentrating on the body and flesh, in particular. Soul and spirit are discussed only insofar as they need to be treated in relation to the body and flesh. The discussion begins with the dimensions of human bodiliness, the main question being: how did Luther perceive the meaning of the body? Was it valued by him and, if so, in what sense? Or did he see it, for example, as a hindrance or even an obstacle? The examination is extended then to the concept of flesh. I ask how Luther used the term. Was it, as many modern studies take for granted, merely the opposite of spirit? Or did it have other connotations and meanings as well?

### FRAME OF LUTHER'S DISCUSSION: THE COMPOSITION OF THE HUMAN BEING

Before getting into the core of Luther's discussion of the body, however, one must outline the frame of his discussion regarding the human being. In the *Magnificat*, Luther noted that by nature (*natur*)—that is, ontologically or structurally—the human being consists of three parts, namely, the spirit, the soul, and the body (*geist*, *seel*, and *leip*).<sup>1</sup> He called the spirit “the highest, the deepest, the noblest part of the human being” due to its capability of faith. The soul, on the other hand, was of the same essence as the spirit, as far as human ontology was concerned, but created for another purpose, that is, to “make the body living (*den leyp lebendig macht*) and to operate through it.” The body, for its part, could not live without the spirit (*der leyp lebet nit on den geyst*), whereas the spirit could very well live without the body.<sup>2</sup>

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1 StA 1, 320. *Magnificat*. See also Vind 2015, 73.

2 StA 1, 320. *Magnificat*.

In the *Freedom of a Christian*, Luther seems to have advocated a different kind of approach: “The human being consists of a twofold nature, spiritual and corporal (*homo enim duplici constat natura, spirituali et corporali*)...”<sup>3</sup> He noted that the human corporal nature could be called flesh as well (*quam carnem dicunt*), while spiritual nature was also called soul (*quam dicunt, animam*). He described the duality with concepts of spiritual, inner, and new human being (*spiritualis, interior, novus homo*), as opposed to fleshy, outer, and old human being (*carnalis, exterior, vetus homo*), both being present in the same human being simultaneously (*duo homines in eodem homine*).<sup>4</sup> Hence, at first glance there seems to be a certain incoherence in these two texts. In the *Magnificat*, Luther noted the tripartite division of human nature, while in the *Freedom of a Christian* he maintained that human nature was dualistic.

The “ancient division of the human being” into three parts, which in part relied on Aristotelian ontology, was advocated by contemporary Scholastics and humanists, Erasmus of Rotterdam (c. 1466–1536) among others.<sup>5</sup> The roots for the tripartite division were in fact already in Plato’s philosophical anthropology. It had been further developed by first-century Jewish and Jewish-Christian writers, including Paul,<sup>6</sup> and used by early Christian theologians such as Origen (184/5–253/4) and Jerome (347–420).<sup>7</sup> Among the biblical texts, this conceptualization is found in its most explicit form in Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians: “May the God of peace himself make you holy in every way. And may your whole being – spirit, soul, and body – be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>8</sup>

The authors of Luther’s day in fact defended a dualist understanding of the human being in terms of a trichotomy.<sup>9</sup> Thereby, the spirit and the body became opposing in their view, as spirit referred to the human being’s inclination toward God whereas the body signified her being an animal-like creature. In the middle of these two, as it were, was the soul, which could turn in either of these directions. This was not a position that Luther was willing to approve. Marion Deschamp has maintained that still in 1519, Luther rejected the philosophical view of human trichotomy due to his emphasis on the wholeness of the human being (*totus homo*): she was all flesh (*totus caro*) and all spirit (*totus spiritus*) at the same time.<sup>10</sup>

3 WA 7, 50. *Freedom of a Christian*.

4 Ibid.; Tripp 1998, 134; Saarinen 2011, 125–126. The concepts of inner and outer human being can be found in Paul epistles. Compare II Cor. 4:16: “That’s why we are not discouraged. No, even if our outer man is wearing out, our inner man is being renewed day by day.”

5 Deschamp 2015, 214; Karimies 2016, 2.

6 van Kooten 2008, 269.

7 zur Mühlen 1995, 203.

8 I Thess. 5:23. For spirit, soul, and body, see also Romans 12:1–2. For a short summation of these concepts in the Bible and of their translation, see, e.g., Good 1997.

9 Deschamp 2015, 214. See also the discussion in Karimies 2016, esp. 3–15.

10 Deschamp 2015, 212, 214–215.

Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen is also of the opinion that instead of emphasizing the division of the body, soul, and spirit, Luther wanted to stress the unity of the human being—unity which could be dominated either by the spirit or by the flesh.<sup>11</sup> According to Risto Saarinen, Luther’s emphasis on “the unity of the individual” separated him in this regard from metaphysical theologians.<sup>12</sup> Pekka Kärkkäinen has remarked in a quite similar vein that in the beginning of the 1520s, Luther rejected the mixing of Christian doctrine with Aristotelian philosophy.<sup>13</sup>

It seems, however, that Luther acknowledged—if not even advocated—both the duality and the trichotomy of human nature, as his words in the *Freedom of a Christian* and in the *Magnificat* would suggest. The purpose of this thesis is obviously not to discuss the extent to which Luther held on to a philosophical, Aristotle-influenced understanding of the human being when using these terminologies. It is enough to say, therefore, that the contradiction between Luther’s use of these terminologies, on the one hand, and the notion of several scholars regarding his critique toward philosophy, on the other, can perhaps be summarized by Antti Raunio’s remark that from Luther’s point of view, philosophical definitions concerning the human being were not wrong *per se* but insufficient: the viewpoint of theology was needed as well.<sup>14</sup> Arguably, even if Luther emphasized the unity of the human being—a theme I shall return to later—he nevertheless needed the concepts, familiar to his readers, to discuss anthropological issues.

On the basis of Luther’s later works, Eero Huovinen has maintained that Luther did use both tripartite (spirit-soul-body) and bipartite terminology (spirit-flesh) when describing human life. He has summarized his view with a table:<sup>15</sup>

	<i>Vita spiritualis</i>	<i>Vita animalis</i>
Tripartite terminology	spirit ( <i>spiritus</i> )	soul ( <i>anima</i> ) + body ( <i>corpus</i> )
Bipartite terminology	spirit ( <i>spiritus</i> ) or soul ( <i>anima</i> )	flesh ( <i>caro</i> )

Table 1. Luther’s anthropological system according to Huovinen 1981, 43.

In the bipartite terminology, the soul and the spirit gained a similar meaning, as they both alluded to the inner human being. Conversely, for Luther the flesh meant the outer human being and her corporal life, as Huovinen has interpreted. On the other hand, in Luther’s tripartite terminology the soul and the body together represented the outer human being as *vita animalis*, with the body reflecting

11 zur Mühlen 1995, 203.

12 Saarinen 2011, 117.

13 Kärkkäinen 2006, 93. For Luther’s reception of Aristotelian philosophy, see, e.g., Salatowsky 2006, 35–132.

14 Raunio 2010, 33.

15 Form and italics mine.

corporal life and the soul being the life-giving aspect, whereas the spirit referred to the spiritual life or the inner human being.<sup>16</sup> I shall return to Luther's view of the human being's dualistic structure in the section that discusses flesh in particular. Meanwhile, it is essential to note that in the passage above Luther used flesh (*caro*) not only in his dualistic approach to the human being, as Huovinen suggests, but also as corporal (*corporalis*), that is, as derivative from the body (*corpus*).

What is essential from the viewpoint of this study is the way in which Luther pictured the role of the body as integral to the human being. Next I will discuss Luther's method of connecting the concept of the body with the soul and spirit, thus demonstrating the essentiality of reciprocity of these concepts from the viewpoint of Luther's view of human bodiliness. In addition, I shall examine the position of the body in relation to the soul and spirit.

## POSITION OF BODY

The human body could not live without the spirit, as Luther noted in the passage quoted above. The dependent relationship between the body and the soul becomes evident in Luther's definition of the soul as that which makes the body living.<sup>17</sup> If, then, the soul was the life-giving aspect, as Luther maintained, what did it mean in practice from a bodily point of view? In the *Magnificat*, Luther noted merely that the Scriptures called soul "the life (*das leben*)."<sup>18</sup> He answered this question more thoroughly, however, a couple of years later in the *Sermons on Genesis*. Luther used Paul's wording to the Corinthians<sup>18</sup> to stress that human beings were created for natural life (*yns natuerliche leben*) and that they were given a living soul (*ein lebendige seele*). Furthermore, he contrasted human beings, who live a corporal life, from Christ, whose life was spiritual (*geistliche leben*). Hence, having a soul signified that one lived a bodily life (*leibliche leben*):<sup>19</sup>

Corporal life is: that one hears and sees, smells, grabs, tastes, digests, ingests and empties one's bowels, procreates children and whatever belongs to the natural being and working of the body. This is called "soul" in the Hebrew language.<sup>20</sup>

The human soul as the signifier of the whole bodily life of a human being can also be seen in Luther's conclusion regarding matter: "Therefore one cannot translate

16 Huovinen 1981, 42–43; Raunio 2010, 35.

17 See also Huovinen 1981, 43; Raunio 2010, 32.

18 I Cor. 15:45: "So it is written: 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit."

19 WA 24, 67b. (WA 14, 119a, 119b.) *Sermons on Genesis*. Luther opposes Christ and Adam also in WA 24, 50b, describing Adam's bodiliness and his earthen nature with concepts concerning his sinfulness.

20 WA 24, 67b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 119a.

the word ‘soul’ in German any better than ‘corporal life’ or ‘a human being, who lives a corporal life.’” The connection between soul and body was further emphasized by his notion that the soul is not merely a human quality, but it could be found in every creature.<sup>21</sup> As Steven Ozment has remarked in his study, “the life of the soul (*vita animae*)” was for Luther the same as “the life of the whole human being (*vita totius hominis*)” already in the beginning of the 1510s.<sup>22</sup>

Luther was by no means the first one to accentuate the dependent relationship between the body and the soul, or the body and the spirit. On the whole, the discussion of the connection of the body and the soul had colored the theological-anthropological discussions of Christian intellectuals for centuries.<sup>23</sup> As the passages cited above suggest, Luther related to the Aristotelian view of the soul and its relationship with the body. The Aristotelian conception separated three kinds of soul; first, the nutritive soul, which is in all creatures, including plants; second, the sensitive soul, which separates animals from plants; and third, the rational soul, which separates human beings from animals.<sup>24</sup> The Aristotelian view was esteemed by intellectuals such as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Much like Luther, Aquinas had defined that “there is one being of soul and body, and this is the being of a human.”<sup>25</sup> According to Aquinas, the reciprocal relationship between the body and the soul meant that whatever happened to one happened to the other as a result. Furthermore, the immortality of the soul required the bodily resurrection as well.<sup>26</sup>

Caroline Walker Bynum has remarked on the tendency in theological writings to tighten even more the relationship between soul and body from the thirteenth century onwards. Among other scholars, she has paid attention to the positive connotations that corporality held in the late Middle Ages, and thus she has challenged the modern view of the distinct separation of body and soul during the medieval period. Although neither scholastics nor mystics disagreed with the idea of a factual difference between body and soul, during the era of high scholasticism the Platonic view of the human being as “soul, making use of the body” was challenged and adjusted. Instead, scholastic discourse took as premise the idea of the human being as both soul and body, which Bynum calls (in modern terms) a psychosomatic unity.<sup>27</sup>

21 WA 24, 67b–68b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 119a–120a. The question of a “living soul” is also briefly described in Cortright 2011, 103–104.

22 Ozment 1969, 101.

23 See, e.g., Cortright 2011, 51; Lagerlund 2014.

24 Bynum 2012, 227; Shields 2016.

25 Stump 2007, 200–201.

26 Cortright 2011, 40; Bynum 2012, 234.

27 Bynum 1995a, 11, 319; 2012, 222–223; Heinonen 2007, 81–82. For Thomas Aquinas’s criticism, see Stump 2007, 193–194.

Thus, the premise of a strong interconnection between the soul and body existed in Luther's view, as in the tradition before him, and the corporal dimensions of the soul were a given for him. As Charles Cortright has noted, in this sense Luther's anthropology was in keeping with the medieval views on the human being.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, in this regard Luther tied human beings strictly to their bodies and thus to the world. His sharp distinction between the bodily life of human beings and the spiritual life of Christ serves as proof of the importance of the body in Luther's anthropology—his view of the human being was not merely something to do with spirituality, but it was down to earth, even in the context of justification and salvation. The image of Christ as spirit and the human being as body contradictory in a sense, but it can also be seen as a continuation of Luther's wording in the *Magnificat*: that the body cannot live without the spirit. This is so not only in the case of the human being herself, who consists of both body and spirit, but also in her relationship with God. Thus, the emphasis can be seen to be in the interrelationship not only between body and soul, but also between body and spirit.<sup>29</sup>

Given the close connection that Luther drew between the body, soul, and spirit, it is consistent that he remarked in the *Magnificat* that the human being's spiritual and mental state affects that of the body:

When now such a spirit, which has the inheritance, is preserved, also soul and body are able to remain without error and evil works (*auch die seele und der leip on yrthum vnd bosze wreck bleiben*), which is not possible if the spirit is without faith. In that case the soul and the whole life can go nowhere but wrongdoing and madness, if it just turns good intentions into darkness, and finds there its own devotion and delight. Through such error and false goods of the soul darken also all the works of the body as evil and misspent (*Szo sein darnach vmb solchs der seelen yrthumb vnd falschen gut dunckel auch alle werck des leibs bosz vnd furworffen*)...<sup>30</sup>

In his preface to Romans in 1522, Luther likewise maintained that “unbelief alone commits sin and brings forth the fleshly pleasure in bad outward works (*also sundiget alleyne der vnglawbe, vnd bringet das fleysch auff vnd lust zu boßen euserlichen wercken*)...”<sup>31</sup> On the whole, the body is to function under the soul and spirit. In the *Magnificat*, Luther noted that the main work of the body was to “carry out and apply that which the soul knows and the spirit believes.”<sup>32</sup> The goodness or evilness of the body, or the nature of its function, is thus dependent on the soul and spirit, as these passages prove. The same remark has been made, for instance, by Anna

28 Cortright 2011, 4.

29 The notion of the interconnection between body and spirit in Luther can be found also in Roper 2012, 10.

30 StA 1, 322. *Magnificat*.

31 WA DB 7, 6–8. Preface to Romans. Translation adopted from LW 35, 369. The passage is also discussed, for instance, in Batka 2014, 244 from the viewpoint of original sin.

32 StA 1, 321. *Magnificat*. Translation by A.T.W. Steinhäuser.



Vind and Steven Ozment. The body for Luther was a home for the interior human being, not merely an enemy or a burden to the soul, as they both can carry sins and evils within them, as Ozment put it.<sup>33</sup> The human body was thus for Luther “the locus within which spiritual life is lived.”<sup>34</sup> In the passages quoted above, the origin of evil is a lack of faith, which is the sign of a corrupted spirit. The corruption of spirit affects soul and body, which can not function properly but are filled with bad intentions and works. If the spirit had faith, on the other hand, the body and soul could actualize the kind of life that was proper for a Christian.

Nonetheless, Luther was not consistent on this question. When pondering in the *Exhortation* the issue of who has authority over the lives of others—the Church and its councils or God—Luther drew both reciprocity and opposition between the soul and body. If one married to fulfill the expectations of others, said Luther, his body became pure and virtuous but his soul became “whore and adulterer” in the eyes of God, due to unbelief and other sins.<sup>35</sup> Thus, it is disputable whether the notion that Luther made in the former passages—that due to the spirit’s unbelief and the soul’s error the body is evil as well and works the wrong way—applies also to the *Exhortation*. It seems that in this passage Luther regarded the soul as evil and the body as pure at the same time. In other words, the body could be virtuous despite the evilness of its life-giver, the soul.

As Ozment has proved, the human body, created from substance, was inevitably other than the soul in Luther’s anthropology, even though they coexisted in the same human being. In this view, Luther joined the tradition of Western discussion on both the soul’s origin and, in particular, the actual distinction between the soul and body.<sup>36</sup> However, Luther’s understanding of the body-soul relationship cannot be understood in terms of both/and or either/or, but rather as simultaneous (*simul*). In Luther’s anthropology, the body and the soul, although differing by nature, were simultaneously present in a human being and affected each other in tandem.<sup>37</sup> As J. Paul Rajashekar has maintained, the idea of *simul* was not to separate but to distinguish.<sup>38</sup> These notions bear a resemblance to Bynum’s remarks on psychosomatic unity, according to which the body was not primarily seen “as

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33 Ozment 1969, 99–100; Bynum 2012, 223; Vind 2015, 74–75. However, Luther had earlier placed the body and spirit in opposition in the *scholia* to Ps. 118:122. See Ozment 1969, 133. Originally, WA 4, 364.

34 Cortright 2011, 86.

35 WA 12, 237. *Exhortation*.

36 Ozment 1969, 95–96. See Ozment’s discussion on the human soul in Luther: Ozment 1969, 94–98.

37 Ozment 1969, 131; Gerle 2015, 51. See also Rittgers 2012, 116 for notions of the whole human self in Luther.

38 Rajashekar 2014, 442. Rajashekar has treated the concept *simul* in the context of using Luther’s theology as a resource for Christian dialogue with other world religions.

the enemy of soul, the container of soul, or the servant of soul,” as a human being was regarded as “a psychosomatic unity, as body and soul together.”<sup>39</sup>

The analysis made thus far contradicts the claim made by Marion Deschamp that for Luther the human body was unambiguously the sinful part of the whole human being.<sup>40</sup> The body seems not to have been merely a dependent victim, as it were, of the human being’s spiritual state. In the *Freedom of a Christian*, Luther maintained:

...in this mortal life on earth, where it is necessary that he [the human being] rules his own body (*corpus suum proprium regat*) and lives with people. Here the works begin: there is no leisure here; here certainly one will have to take care of fasting, vigils, works, and other moderate discipline with which to exercise and subordinate [the body] to the spirit so that it will obey and be similar to the inner human being and faith, nor to rebel [against] or prevent [the spirit], as its nature is, if it is not repressed.<sup>41</sup>

In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther treated the topic akin to his discussion of good works: “[a Christian] truly apprehends and declares [that] their good works are done freely and only for the good of one’s neighbor, and to exercise the body (*ad exercendum corpus*)...”<sup>42</sup> Quite similar wording also emerges in Luther’s imaginary discussion of the proper reasons for choosing life in the cloister: “I lay hold of this kind of life for the sake of exercising my body (*exercendi corporis gratia*)...”<sup>43</sup> Two features become evident in the passages above: the body being of a lower status than the soul and spirit, and the understanding of the body as a target of self-discipline and exercise.

In his remarks on exercising the body, Luther seems to have been somewhat bound to a certain conception regarding bodiliness in late medieval Europe. In the thought of numerous religious people in the late Middle Ages, it was regarded as essential to remain abstinent from the pleasures of the body and to have the ability to put one’s reason over temptations. In practice, this aim was connected to virginity as the ideal of human life. In particular, mystics such as Mechthild of Magdeburg and Henry Suso believed that the body was an obstacle for the soul. The body was to be controlled by means of fasting, staying awake, and even physical torture. Eating, sleeping, speaking, and sexual relations— among other things—were considered as delights of the flesh that one should be able to be abstinent from. This ideal is clearly revealed, for instance, in the *vitae* of the saints. Control of the body was thus one of the central points of the way of life of dedicated religious people.<sup>44</sup>

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39 Bynum 2012, 222. See also Bynum 1995a, 11, 319.

40 See Deschamp 2015, 217.

41 WA 7, 60. *Freedom of a Christian*.

42 WA 8, 607. *On Monastic Vows*.

43 WA 8, 604. *On Monastic Vows*.

44 Heinonen 2007, 84–85.

The context and the way in which Luther wrote about exercising the body should be noted, however. *Freedom of a Christian* was published in November 1520, while *On Monastic Vows* was released a year later. In 1520, Luther regarded fasting and vigils as proper ways, among other things, of keeping the body under control. Thus, he still held that monastic life was a proper way to live as a Christian. Yet a year later, his tone had shifted, as can be seen when reading *On Monastic Vows* as a whole.

I have discussed the gradual change in 1521 in Luther's view concerning monastic life in an article examining Luther's narration of his role during his stay at Wartburg Castle, as well as his self-authorization.<sup>45</sup> During the summer of 1521, Luther was still hesitant regarding the question of whether the habit could be abandoned with good conscience. Gradually he took his stand on the subject, as I argue, largely due to the need to react to the actions of other evangelicals in Wittenberg, about whom he heard through correspondence with co-workers. In *On Monastic Vows*, then, he questioned the monastic way of life, and he pondered very critically the terms under which choosing the cloister would be possible.<sup>46</sup>

In addition, due to his usage of soul in the meaning of corporal life, discussed above, it seems evident that he dissociated himself in his anthropology from the idealization of spiritual, virginal life at least from 1521 onwards; this is rather accentuated in *On Monastic Vows*, for instance. However, aspects of exercising the body through monastic discipline still remained in his thinking. In Luther's texts, therefore, the body as a target of self-discipline and exercise is clearly one dimension of his reasoning concerning human bodiliness.

Luther nonetheless regarded that it was essential to understand to what extent one could and should exercise the body. Even though he acknowledged the body's lust and desire (*corporis lasciviam et concupiscentiam*) in *Freedom of a Christian*, Luther noted that one should instruct oneself on how much to use disciplining methods in order to control desires.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, he held control of the body as positive by nature: "For in this way the concern we have over the body is Christian, and thereby through its health and aptness we work and are able to help them [other people]..."<sup>48</sup> In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther maintained: "...you do not forget that God created the body, the soul, and their belongings, and He wants

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45 Mikkola 2014b.

46 Mikkola 2014b, 89–95. The same notion of Luther's graduality in the matter is also found in Roper 2016, 279. For the separation of secular and regular clerics and their morals in medieval discourse, see, e.g., Thibodeaux 2015, 23–25 *et passim*.

47 WA 7, 60. *Freedom of a Christian*.

48 WA 7, 64. *Freedom of a Christian*.

you to take care of them (*non obliviscaris deum creasse corpus, animam et rem, eorumque te velle curam habere*)...”<sup>49</sup>

Thus, the importance lay not in disciplining the body to the greatest extent possible. The key was to discipline the body in order to be able to act as a servant for others in Christian faith and love, as the former quotation indicates. Regarding control of the body, Luther’s focus was thereby on the benefit of the neighbor, not oneself. In the second quotation, Luther brought forward the significance of taking care of one’s body by emphasizing its importance to its possessor. Accordingly, the aim of taking care of one’s body was not only a means to benefit one’s neighbor, but it was also a responsibility, commanded by God through creation. By treating the body in this way, Luther gave it a significance of its own as a product of godly creation. The context in which Luther took this stance was in his criticism of the practices of monastic life in *On Monastic Vows* and in encouraging readers to use their common sense in restrictions concerning their bodies. In this respect, Luther’s focus was similar in the passages of *On Monastic Vows* and *Freedom of a Christian*. The body was to be treated and used in the way that God had intended: by honoring the creation of the human being as a bodily creature.

However, Luther’s discussion of the fall in the *Sermons on Genesis* raises the idea that God himself was also willing to discipline the human body. When describing the punishments after the fall, Luther praised their nature as temporal and physical instead of eternal: “...He [God] wants to be favorable and help the soul, but the body He wants to hassle.”<sup>50</sup> The aim of physical punishments for both woman and man was to create bodily pains and troubles: for woman, the pains of childbearing and giving birth; for man, the hardships of work and making a living. In the *Sermons*, Luther presented matrimony as life that was in accordance with God’s will and, as the opposite, virginal life in a cloister. If people were to live contrary to God’s will, the threat of receiving an eternal punishment instead of a temporal one was plausible. The suffering of the body was thus good for the soul and vice versa, the principle being the same for both sexes.<sup>51</sup>

Luther’s aim in this text was to emphasize the life meant for human beings already in the creation, that is, corporal life with the duties belonging to it. Nevertheless, the punishments that became a part of everyday human life after the fall made living troublesome for both men and women, which had not been the case

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49 WA 8, 662–663. *On Monastic Vows*.

50 WA 24, 103b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 141a, 148a.

51 WA 24, 101b, 103b. (WA 14, 113a.) *Sermons on Genesis*. The same emphasis on the reverse good of the body and soul can be found also in WA 8, 663. *On Monastic Vows*. In WA 12, 243. *Exhortation*, Luther discussed the reverse good of the flesh and spirit. Mattox and Maron have also paid attention to Luther’s emphasis on matrimony not as a secular but a truly spiritual estate. Maron 1983, 277–279; Mattox 2003b, 458.

after creation. Thus, the sufferings of the body were a by-product of human life. In this passage, Luther seems to be affiliated with a more dualistic view of the body and soul than in the other previously quoted passages. In this context, the body for him was a metaphor for temporal life and the soul for eternal life.

Luther appears to have shared a type of medieval understanding that Bynum has presented: “The idea of person ... was a concept of self in which physicality was integrally bound to sensation, emotion, reasoning, identity – and therefore finally to whatever one means by salvation.”<sup>52</sup> The analysis made thus far proves that the human body was an undeniable part of Luther’s discussion concerning the human being—including as a spiritual creature. The body and the way it works are heavily dependent on both the soul and spirit. In fact, the position of the body seems to be somewhat lower than the soul and spirit. The human body is something that needs to be controlled—I will discuss this idea more thoroughly in Chapter I.2—but at the same time it is a good creation of God, having an effect on the human being’s mind and spirit as well. The relationship between the spiritual and corporal, and the bearing of the latter, is further clarified in the following section, which discusses the concept of the flesh.

## THE FLESH—ABSTRACT AND ACTUAL

The dualistic view of the human being was noted in the previous section: the question was one of opposition between the spiritual, on the one hand, and the corporal or fleshly on the other. In the *Magnificat*, Luther indeed maintained that the human being was divided into two parts: spirit and flesh (*geist und fleisch*). However, this division was not ontological but had to do with the human being’s qualities (*eygenshaff*).<sup>53</sup> In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther discussed the two terms by writing: “...if only we go about according to the spirit and not according to the flesh (*modo ambulemus secundum spiritum et non secundum carnem*).”<sup>54</sup> This view of the human being as an arena of struggle between the spirit and flesh was rooted especially in Pauline theology.<sup>55</sup> In Romans, for example, matter was discussed in the following way: “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”<sup>56</sup>

52 Bynum 1995a, 11. See Cortright 2011, 169 for a similar notion. See also Bynum 1995a, 8–13; Bynum 2012, 222–224.

53 StA 1, 320. *Magnificat*; Vind 2015, 74.

54 WA 8, 653. *On Monastic Vows*.

55 For the same notion, see Deschamp 2015, 214.

56 Romans 8:5. See also Romans 8:3–13; Galatians 3:3, 5:16–17, 6:8.

Luther thus described the human being as a creature with spirit, soul, and body (Ger. *Leip*, Lat. *corpus*), on the one hand, and as having spirit and flesh (Ger. *Fleisch*, Lat. *carnis*)—or the body—on the other. To put it simply, one could say that the human being—consisting of three parts: spirit, soul, and body—could live out either good (spirit) or evil (flesh).<sup>57</sup> Understood in this way, spirit and flesh for Luther were allegories concerning the human way of being, compared to the spirit-soul-body-division. Put theologically, spirit and flesh had to do especially with theological anthropology, whereas spirit, soul, and body belonged more to discussions of philosophical anthropology—as has already become clear.<sup>58</sup>

The question of spirit and flesh was thus already that of a struggle between two opposing qualities within the human being. This seems to suggest that the flesh was in these terms a negatively charged concept for Luther. Indeed, the flesh as a symbol of evil is evident in several contexts in Luther's texts in the beginning of the 1520s. Luther discussed "the wisdom of the flesh (*prudential carnis*)"<sup>59</sup> when evaluating baptism in *Babylonian Captivity*, thereby alluding to the false wisdom of human beings. In this context, the opposition of flesh and spirit was particularly crucial.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, in *On Monastic Vows* Luther judged the idea of "righteousness of the flesh (*iustitias carnis*)" to be impossible.<sup>61</sup> In a letter to Frederick the Wise in March 1522, Luther justified his intent to return from Wartburg to Wittenberg by remarking that ordinary people read the gospel in a fleshly sense (*sie nehmen's fleischlich auf*), knowing its veracity but not wanting to act according to it.<sup>62</sup>

Risto Saarinen has pointed out that already during 1515–1516 Luther regarded the flesh, when understood as opposite of the spirit, as an infirmity or a wound of the whole human being. According to Saarinen, the difference (and actual dichotomy) between spirit and flesh was for Luther due to the fact that the spirit comes to the human being from outside.<sup>63</sup> Anna Vind maintains that the meaning of spirit (and hence of flesh as well, I would argue) is best understood as "a question of faith

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57 For a similar idea, see Vind 2015, 76.

58 I want to thank both Professor Pekka Kärkkäinen and Professor Risto Saarinen for clarifying these concepts. Luther discussed theological and philosophical anthropology the most explicitly in his disputation *De Homine* in 1536. See WA 39<sup>1</sup>, 175–177 (*die thesen*), 177–180 (*das disputationsfragment*). For a discussion about the disputation, see, e.g., Sleniczka 2014, 217–220.

59 WA 6, 527. *Babylonian Captivity*.

60 WA 6, 535. *Babylonian Captivity*: "quod ad mortificationem carnis et vivificationem spiritus..."

61 WA 8, 640. *On Monastic Vows*. In the *Freedom of a Christian*, Luther similarly used the flesh as an abstract concept, referring to evilness. WA 7, 69.

62 WA BR 2, no. 456a, 461. To Frederick the Wise (March 7 or 8, 1522).

63 Saarinen 2011, 116, also n.40, 118.

or lack of faith.”<sup>64</sup> Summarized by Notger Slenczka, “‘Spirit’ and ‘flesh’ are thus not primarily designations for parts or abilities of a human being [in Luther’s view] but characterize ‘the entire person’ – all his aptitudes and capacities – in relationship to God.”<sup>65</sup> If one wants to systematize Luther’s thinking, this division of flesh and spirit can be called Luther’s bipartite anthropology, as Vind, for instance, has done.<sup>66</sup> To put it simply, in these readings the spirit is something that comes from God as well as something that pulls one toward God, while the flesh is something within a person that leads one into sin.<sup>67</sup> This particular way of understanding the meaning of the flesh was, as its Pauline basis suggests, widely adopted before Luther.<sup>68</sup>

In Luther’s use, however, the flesh gained other meanings as well—and thus did not merely represent opposition to spirit. In the *Babylonian Captivity*, Luther concluded: “For as long as we are in the flesh, the desires of the flesh disturb and are provoked (*Nam donec in carne sumus, desyderia carnis movent et moventur*).”<sup>69</sup> The first use of the term “flesh” clearly implies bodily reality, as being in the flesh signifies a human being’s mortal life in a concrete way, whilst the second use of the term perhaps refers more to an abstraction and thus is in opposition to the spirit.

Use of the flesh as an image of the human body can also be found, for instance, in Luther’s July 1521 letter to Philipp Melanchthon, written from Wartburg Castle; in this case, it lacks negative connotations as such. In the letter, Luther wished that they would not be drawn to one another from wrong motives, which was the case if “we look for the presence of the flesh rather than the spirit (*ut magis praesentiam carnis quam spiritus quaeramus*).”<sup>70</sup> A similar kind of reference to the flesh as a symbol of the corporal human being can be found in a letter from June 1523 to John Oecolampadius (1482–1531), wherein Luther reckoned that there was a threat of being worn out in the flesh in comparison with beginning in the spirit (*carne me consummari, qui spiritu cepi*), due to all the work he had with former nuns and monks.<sup>71</sup> This was arguably a wording that Luther had adopted from

64 Vind 2015, 75.

65 Slenczka 2014, 216. According to Fuhrmann, the question is of hierarchical opposites. Fuhrmann 2015, 96.

66 Vind 2015, 75. Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, among others, has alluded to the duality simply as Luther’s “biblical understanding of inner and outer human being,” being a spiritual one and a carnal one. zur Mühlen 1995, 203. See also Slenczka 2014, 215–216; Vind 2015, 77. Denis Janz writes, in a similar fashion, about the new creation and the natural man. Janz 1983, 26.

67 For a discussion of the flesh and spirit, see esp. Saarinen 2011, 117–121; also Bühler 1981, 79–80; Dieter 2001, 314.

68 See, e.g., Cortright 2011, 18, 20 for the views on the flesh in the Early Church. For the medieval context, see, e.g., Biernoff 2002, 17–36.

69 WA 6, 534. *Babylonian Captivity*.

70 WA BR 2, no. 418, 359, 122–123. To Philipp Melanchthon (July 13, 1521). For a similar, neutral use of the concept flesh, see WA 7, 56. *Freedom of a Christian*.

71 WA BR 3, no. 626, 97, 33–34. To Johann Oecolampadius (June 20, 1523).

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, Luther was at the time handling the fates of several sisters and brothers—including Katharina von Bora—who had abandoned their cloisters.<sup>73</sup> Even though Luther alluded to the spirit-flesh opposition in this letter, he actually used the term “flesh” as a synonym for his own body.

A twofold use of the concept of the flesh can be found in theoretical texts from 1522 and 1523 as well. In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther used the image of the flesh in the following way:

When our flesh is healthy, it is in our dominion (*Est sane caro nostra in potestate nostra*), so that we can put out its eyes, keep hands, feet, and tongue under control. [We can] strangle it with a loop, or drown it in the water, which we could do with a tyrant who was our inferior and in our dominion. ... Besides, as far as celibacy is concerned, [is there] anyone ignorant of this inner and intrinsic tyrant in our members (*tyrannum illum domesticum et intrinsecum in membris nostris*), who is no better in our dominion than the malicious will of an external tyrant?<sup>74</sup>

Luther's idea of the flesh as the center of sin and evil appears in the analogy of a malicious tyrant. What also becomes clear from this passage, however, is that the flesh was somewhat of a synonym for the body in this context. Luther wrote about the flesh in a very concrete way as members of the body, which one could try to dominate by means of discipline. It is only somewhat of a synonym because Luther seems to allude to it as something *within* the human body, yet something *not quite* of the human body. The phrase “intrinsic tyrant in our members” seems to imply that the flesh possesses the body, being in the body and causing its untoward behavior, but not coming originally of the body.

Even though Luther used the flesh as a synonym for the body in the passage, he nevertheless accounted for his example of the tyrant by using a biblical passage from Galatians:<sup>75</sup> “The flesh wars against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. These things war against each other, so that you cannot do the things you want to do.”<sup>76</sup> Contrary to the idea of the flesh as the body, the biblical reference can be regarded as an abstract image of the flesh, opposing spirit and thus symbolizing the evilness of the human being.

In the *Exhortation*, Luther referred to the second chapter of Genesis: “It is not good to be alone.”<sup>77</sup> He observed that “good”—in the meaning of marriage—was good particularly for the spirit. For the flesh, it was troublesome to have a wife, to rule her as well as the servants, to raise children, and by all means to support

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72 Compare Gal. 3:3: “Having started out with the Spirit, are you now ending up with the flesh?”

73 For the sisters, see Smith 1999, 747–748; Rüttgardt 2007, 305.

74 WA 8, 631. *On Monastic Vows*.

75 Gal. 5:17.

76 WA 8, 631–632. *On Monastic Vows*. The idea of the opposition of the flesh and spirit is a core idea of the text *Freedom of a Christian*; see WA 7, 49–73.

77 Gen. 2:18



oneself and the household. A man was thus in the hands of all the members of his household, and thereby he had much sorrow and hardships.<sup>78</sup> Celibacy, on the other hand, might be good for the flesh, since one could focus on “pleasurable, lazy living”<sup>79</sup> instead of supporting a family. As far as the spirit was concerned, that route was not God’s intent and as such it could not lead to salvation.<sup>80</sup> Luther here opposed the spirit and “flesh and its desires (*fleysch und seyne lueste*),”<sup>81</sup> yet at the same time he alluded to the flesh as the body. This becomes evident in his discussions of actual bodily hardships rooted in living in matrimony.

Furthermore, “life in the flesh (*leben im fleisch*)” was a concept that Luther used to discuss the body and bodily life particularly in the context of married life.<sup>82</sup> When explaining the second chapter of Genesis<sup>83</sup> in the *Sermons*, Luther remarked that life in the flesh signified the husband and wife’s common life. By means of marriage, they became one flesh (*ein fleisch, una caro*), not only physically but also in terms of material and mental possessions.<sup>84</sup> Woman and man were created to have their life in common and share “servants, children, money, corners, fields, property, fame or misery, shame, sickness, and health.”<sup>85</sup> In this context, the words “bodily” and “the flesh” were for Luther a metaphor for all the contents of practical life.

A similar conception of living in the flesh can be found in other texts as well. Luther used the expression in a very pragmatic way in a letter from January 1522 to Nicholas von Amsdorf when discussing people who were still living, compared to those who were dead.<sup>86</sup> In the *Freedom of a Christian*, he used the wording to describe this life compared to the future life: “...while we live in the flesh (*in carne vivimus*), we neither begin nor accomplish [that] which in the future life (*in futura vita*) will be accomplished...”<sup>87</sup> In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther had an imaginary discussion about whether to choose cloistered life: “...I do this since I must live in the flesh (*in carne vivendum est*), nor can I be idle.”<sup>88</sup>

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78 WA 12, 241. *Exhortation*.

79 WA 12, 241. *Exhortation*.

80 WA 12, 241. *Exhortation*. A similar discussion is found in WA 8, 663. *On Monastic Vows*.

81 WA 12, 241. *Exhortation*.

82 WA 24, 80b. *Sermons on Genesis*. In WA 14, it is expressed with “alles was zcum fleisch gehortt...” WA 14, 127b.

83 Gen. 2:24: “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

84 WA 24, 79a, 80b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 127a. Luther discussed the issue of becoming one flesh also in the *Babylonian Captivity*, although in terms of his definition of policy to deny matrimony’s sacramental character. WA 6, 551–552.

85 WA 24, 80b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 127a, 127b–128b.

86 WA BR 2, no. 449, 422, 41–42. To Nicholas von Amsdorf (January 13, 1522).

87 WA 7, 59. *Freedom of a Christian*.

88 WA 8, 604. *On Monastic Vows*.

In all of these examples, living in the flesh had a meaning that referred to factual bodily reality. The wording was thus used in these passages neutrally: the phrase *itself* did not, in other words, refer in Luther's discussion either to approval or disapproval of a certain way of life. It seems that living in the flesh, when used as a pragmatic yet neutral concept, could ultimately allude to whatever form of life one was aimed at by God.

Antti Raunio has aptly maintained that the "reconstruction [of Luther's anthropology] is challenged by Luther's terminology, which changes from text to text, and by the conceptual distinctions that he often assumes without explanation."<sup>89</sup> Raunio's remark is indeed illuminative from the viewpoint of my analysis as well. In the passages discussed above, Luther could use the term "flesh" in the very same place in two different senses: as an image of the body in a quite pragmatic sense, and as an abstract image, as it were, of human sinfulness. Thus, the flesh and the body were interchangeable concepts for Luther when referring to the actual body of the human being, or her bodily life.<sup>90</sup> However, in its meaning as the body, the term "flesh" often retained some of its negative connotations as well, such as when Luther discussed the evils or hardships of the body.

## THE BODY AND FLESH AS CONTEXTUAL CONCEPTS

Hubertus Blaumeiser has stated that Luther's anthropology (*Menschenbild*) was both negative and positive: negative in terms of the human being's fleshliness and positive in terms of spirituality.<sup>91</sup> He has thus cited the view of a battle between the flesh and spirit within the human being. In a quite similar fashion, Marion Deschamp has suggested—and this is the starting point of her whole discussion—that the body represented for Luther "the sinful part of man [i.e. human being]."<sup>92</sup> On the contrary, Elisabeth Gerle is of the opinion that the body was not a problem or hindrance for Luther in terms of the salvation of the human being.<sup>93</sup>

All the above-mentioned interpretations seem to be too narrow to explain the nature of Luther's view of the body and flesh. First, Luther based his discussions concerning these on several traditions, which held different kinds of attitudes toward human bodiliness or fleshliness. On the one hand, he discussed bodiliness in the light of the tradition of Aristotelian thinking, for instance. On the other hand, he made use of biblical tradition and the division of flesh and spirit employed, for

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89 Raunio 2010, 27.

90 For a somewhat similar notion, see Cortright 2011, 218.

91 Blaumeiser 1995, 485.

92 Deschamp 2015, 212.

93 Gerle 2015, 63, 137.

instance, by Paul and Augustine. In addition to the various traditions which can be detected in Luther's remarks, his personal use of the concepts was first and foremost dependent on the context. As I have shown, in Luther's writing "flesh" was not merely a negative term referring to sin and wickedness, but it could also be used in relation to the body in various ways in different contexts. To simply brand the flesh as something negative does not do justice to Luther's multifaceted thinking, nor is it free from anachronism.

Based on Luther's texts from 1509–1516, Steven Ozment has claimed that one finds a variety of descriptions of the characteristics of the human being in Luther's thinking, such as soul, conscience, heart, and spirit. According to Ozment, "we find a much more complex picture, lacking the terminological precision and consistency..."<sup>94</sup> The same argument as that of Ozment can be made on the basis of an examination of the concepts body and flesh. In fact, these two concepts were "fluid" already during the Middle Ages, as Suzannah Bienoff has noted.<sup>95</sup> The contextuality, even inconsistency, with which Luther treated the concepts body and flesh can be detected in the examples I have cited above. One of the most illuminating passages is from *On Monastic Vows*, where Luther discussed flesh as a tyrant. The dissimilarity in Luther's language concerning the flesh and the body points to the impossibility of making a systematic, watertight presentation of these two concepts in Luther's use. Thus, the same complexity in Luther's terminological usage which Ozment has noted in his study regarding the soul and spirit applies to the body and flesh as well.

One can indeed find examples in Luther's texts of the body being a burden, even an enemy—views that do not support Gerle's remark—but also the container of the soul. Similarly, one can find a negatively charged but also quite neutral usage of the concept of the flesh. When dealing with questions regarding the need to exercise the body, for instance, Luther also used the concept of the flesh as a concrete image to refer to the factual body of the human being. In addition to the pragmatic meaning that flesh can have, it can also be an abstract symbol of the wickedness of the human being in Luther's language. I argue that Luther's views on bodily issues come close to the discourse of late medieval thinkers, which Amy Hollywood has described as a tension between the evilness and goodness of the body:

For many medieval thinkers the body was seen as the locus of both sinfulness and holiness; it is, therefore, the site of both greater ambivalence and of higher valuation than many modern commentators recognize.<sup>96</sup>

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94 Ozment 1969, 100.

95 Bienoff 2002, 12.

96 Hollywood 1995, 182. Heinonen has also noted in her study that quite a few, even opposite, approaches to the body and corporality occurred in parallel in the late medieval Europe. Heinonen 2007, 82–84. See also Gerle 2015, 87.

One explanation for Luther's inconsistency could be, as Robert Kolb has noted when discussing Luther's hermeneutics of distinctions, that "Luther did not know that he was devising hermeneutical principles for generations to come, so he was not always careful or consistent in his use of terminology that became critical for his practice of theology."<sup>97</sup> As this chapter proves, the significance of the specific context in which Luther spoke or wrote, not to mention the importance of a certain genre, is obvious.<sup>98</sup> I will give two examples. *On Monastic Vows*, for instance, was written to monks and nuns who were reconsidering their vows. Luther's aim was to convince the monks of the rareness of true chastity, that is, the power of the mind over the body. He seems to have presumed that the majority of the monks not only had knowledge of the stances toward bodiliness in previous and contemporary views, but also their very own experiences of the desires of one's body. Accordingly, the emphasis on the urges of the flesh, which are likened to an evil tyrant, or the body's sinfulness, becomes understandable. Luther thus described the harsh reality of his brothers, trying to convince them to channel their desire properly if they could not control their lust in the cloister.

On the other hand, it seems that in the *Sermons on Genesis* it was more crucial for Luther to emphasize the corporal life of a human being, and he did this in a quite different manner than in the abovementioned treatise. Although the emphasis arose from his practical aim to criticize the cloister, as was the case with the former treatise as well, the context of publicly given sermons was a favorable means of promoting the ideal of matrimony as a God-given direction of life. Thus, Luther's illumination of life in the flesh as something suitable for all people, for example, included more positive connotations of bodiliness. In other words, Luther's way of giving pastoral guidance—his tone, so to speak, and thus his biblical interpretation—was very much dependent on the audience that his words were intended for.

## 2. BODY POLITICS: BODILY NEEDS AND THE IDEAL OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Luther's interpretation of the meaning of "life in the flesh," discussed in the former chapter, led him to discuss human sexuality<sup>99</sup> as well as the everyday life of women and men. This chapter thus aims to explore Luther's body politics as being applicable to both women and men. Under scrutiny is the way he used various rhetorical means to highlight the importance of human bodiliness, on the one hand, and

97 Kolb 2014, 169.

98 Kolb has made the same notion. See Kolb 2014, 170.

99 I acknowledge that "sexuality" or "sexual desire" are modern concepts and have not been used before the eighteenth century, and perhaps even as late as 1800. See, e.g., Smith 2000, 318; Wiesner 2002, 154; Arffman 2006, 173.

the importance of other factors he attached to his body-talk, on the other. How, then, did Luther build his rhetoric that began with the human body and ended with the ideal of social control?

## SEXUALITY: BODILY FUNCTION YET EVIL LUST

God's word says in Genesis 1 [:27–28]<sup>100</sup> and 2 [:18–25]<sup>101</sup> that I am a man and you are a woman, and that we shall and must come together to multiply; no one is to prevent us from doing that, nor can anyone forbid us to do it; neither do we have it in our power to vow otherwise. We dare to act upon the basis of that word...<sup>102</sup>

Luther used these passages from Genesis to prove to the Teutonic Knights that reproduction was a natural bodily need. The same emphasis can be found in *On Married Life*:

For it is not a matter of free choice or decision but an essential and natural thing, that whatever is a man must have a woman and whatever is a woman must have a man. ... [I]t is not a command but more than a command, namely, a divine ordinance which is not our business to hinder or ignore.<sup>103</sup>

In his treatise *Against the Falsely Named Spiritual Estate*, which was also published in 1522, Luther likewise maintained that God himself created “the body [with] its members... [To prohibit reproduction is the same as making] nature not be nature, fire not to burn, water not be wet...”<sup>104</sup> According to Luther, reproduction is God's command, a divine work (*gottlich werck*). It is a natural part of human nature, and at least as important as other bodily functions, such as eating, sleeping and emptying one's bowels, as he pointed out in various texts.<sup>105</sup>

The fact that makes reproduction natural is the outgrowth of God's ordinance: the human body produces seed, which makes the need to reproduce unavoidable in any circumstance, as Luther polemically put it.<sup>106</sup> As Charles Cortright has remarked, intercourse was an essential part of being a human being in Luther's

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100 “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”

101 “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

102 WA 12, 238. *Exhortation*.

103 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276. *On Married Life*. See also Charles Cortright's analysis of Luther's intention: “...more than being merely that which has been made, the creation is that which has been commanded or willed into being by the sovereign will and love of God.” Cortright 2011, 59.

104 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 156. *Against the Falsely Named Spiritual Estate of the Pope and Bishops*.

105 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 156. *Against the Spiritual Estate*; WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276. *On Married Life*; WA 12, 238. *Exhortation*. See also the discussions in Cortright 2011, 152–157; Gerle 2015, 147.

106 WA 8, 632, *On Monastic Vows*; WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 277. *On Married Life*; WA 24, 53b. (WA 14, 109b.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

thinking.<sup>107</sup> The organs inside a human being were the basis of the argument Luther used to prove his point: “It [God’s command to be fruitful and multiply] is an implanted nature and a substance [in us] just as the organs which are involved in it.”<sup>108</sup> The question was thus one of the natural functions and, accordingly, the needs of the human body, whether a masculine or feminine one, as Luther noted, for instance, in both the *Exhortation* and the treatise *Against the Spiritual Estate*.<sup>109</sup> The body’s mission thus became most visible through human genitals.

To further underline his views on the unavoidability of the act of sex, Luther compared the relationship of woman and man to fire and straw in *On Married Life*. As fire and straw burn when combined, likewise man and woman inevitably come together in sexual intercourse. It would be absurd to assume, Luther noted, that nothing would happen if they were put together. For him, prohibiting them to do so was as if to say: “be neither man nor woman.”<sup>110</sup> In the *Sermons on Genesis*, Luther reverted to the allegory of the sun and moon by wondering whether the sun could make a decision to not shine, that is, a decision that was against its nature. Hence, he stated that one’s refusal to reproduce was the same as not wanting to be a human being at all (*du woeltest kein mensch sein*).<sup>111</sup>

The view of sexuality as something implanted in the human being was not a novel one. It can be found at least in the thought of the physician Galen (c. 129–200) and thenceforth in discussions of Christian authors. Sexuality was present in Paradise, said Augustine, though without lust. Jerome, for his part, maintained that to reject sexual intercourse and procreation, the natural functions of the body, was to act against human nature.<sup>112</sup> Even though Jerome favored virginity, unlike Luther, his rationale was the same. Centuries later, Thomas Aquinas noted in the *Summa Theologiae*, quite in the same vein as Augustine, that sexuality was a natural part of human life:

For what is natural to man [i.e. the human being] was neither acquired nor forfeited by sin. Now it is clear that generation by coition is natural to man [i.e. the human being] by reason of his animal life, which he possessed even before sin, as above explained, just as it is natural to other perfect animals, as the corporeal members make it clear. So we cannot allow that these members would not have had a natural use, as other members had, before sin.<sup>113</sup>

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107 Cortright 2011, 80.

108 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276. *On Married Life*.

109 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 156. *Against the Spiritual Estate*; WA 12, 242. *Exhortation*.

110 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276, 284–285. *On Married Life*. Quite similarly WA 12, 242. *Exhortation*. For fire and straw, see also WA 10<sup>III</sup>, 265. A sermon of August 10, 1522.

111 WA 24, 53b–54b. (WA 14, 112a.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

112 Shaw 1998, 62, 84–85, 97–98; Cortright 2011, 26; Gerle 2015, 108.

113 Quoted in Cortright 2011, 42. Thomas rejected Augustine’s view of sin transmitting through sexual intercourse, however. Cortright 2011, 41–42.

The idea of unavoidable sexual force within the human being was commonly used in the evangelical rhetoric as well. Marjorie Plummer has remarked that the "appeal to the universal natural impulse of sexuality forms the basis of many evangelical statements" that were directed at prohibitions of clerical marriage.<sup>114</sup> Thus, not only Luther but also other evangelical actors presented sexual urge as an "overwhelming practical obstacle to celibacy."<sup>115</sup> The usage of human bodiliness when justifying everyone's need to have a spouse—in order to lead a proper Christian life—was at use already, and perhaps specifically, during the first years of the 1520s. The evangelical rhetoric aimed at creating a connection between clergy and laity with the intention of proving that the needs of human body were the same for everyone.<sup>116</sup> They thus proposed an anthropological frame of thought that included both clergy and laity.

The idea of *Naturflüssen*, which Joel Harrington has translated as "natural urges," was such a central argument in the language of the evangelicals that not only their contemporary opponents but also some modern historians have suspected that personal struggle was a more important reason for its emphasis than theological deduction.<sup>117</sup> I will discuss the possible influence of Luther's own struggles on his language in Chapter IV.2. Meanwhile, it has to be noted that despite Harrington's excellent notions, his analysis does not do full justice to the separation of sexuality as a natural bodily function, on the one hand, and lustful feelings, on the other. The concept *Naturflüssen* (lit. "natural flows"), for instance, can indeed be translated as "natural urges," but specifically in the meaning of bodily functions—as flow obviously refers first and foremost to the flow of semen within the human body.

However, the idea of daring to act, which appears in the passage from the *Exhortation* cited at the beginning of this section ("We dare to act upon the basis of that word"), raises the question of whether human sexuality was indeed inevitable by nature in Luther's view. If a human being was ordered by God to reproduce in such a way that it was essential to his nature, there should not have been a chance to act otherwise. Nevertheless, Luther seems to have left open the possibility of acting contrary to human bodily needs in spite of their unavoidability by noting that, due to the biblical wording, one dares to act according to one's nature. The explanation can be found by looking closer at the text directed at the knights and its rhetoric. Luther's wish, as he put it, was to encourage the knights to establish an example for brothers still struggling with their consciences, in order to increasingly produce "the fruits of the gospel."<sup>118</sup> He estimated there to be a large number of

114 Plummer 2012, 110. See also Harrington 2005, 61.

115 Harrington 2005, 62.

116 Plummer 2012, 110.

117 Harrington 2005, 63.

118 WA 12, 232. *Exhortation*.

noteworthy knights who would be glad of an opportunity to change their lives in a decent direction—were there only a courageous example.<sup>119</sup>

Hence, his aim was to support the knights to act boldly, to abandon their vow of chastity and marry. He noted the number of men wanting to make this kind of decision. The claim to be a role model for other men was Luther's way of trying to make the knights perform in a manner that was desirable from his point of view. As his central justification to try to convince his readers, he used the biblical word of Genesis. However, Luther was unwilling to state that the knights were living in sin, arguably for political reasons, for it served his best interests to keep them as allies in the delicate religious-political situation of the first years of the 1520s. Therefore, to the detriment of his views on the certainty of the needs of the human body, he emphasized the idea of daring to act.

Thus, per creation, the sexual act was for Luther specifically a physical aspect belonging to natural bodily functions, as I have discussed in this section. When referring to creation, Luther did not speak of sexual desire but only of the need of human beings to multiply (*sie sich mehren*). Luther's emphasis on the body as the basis of living for both sexes is thus evident from the viewpoint of reproduction. Hence, the essential sexual nature of a human being, female or male, is implicit in Luther's thinking. His question of whether one was even a human being at all when forbidden from or refused sexual intercourse was first and foremost an assertion against the cloister and in favor of clerical marriage.

However, in addition to being an inherent bodily need created by God, sexuality did contain the aspect of desire or lust:

[After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve] see and feel that they are naked. Now it was impossible to control all their bodily members (*allen gliedmassen*) or to guide evil lust (*der boesen lust*). They saw each other with evil lust and impure desires (*unkeuschen begirden*).<sup>120</sup> ... [T]hey feel shameful desire in their flesh and cannot help it (*fuelen die schendliche lust ynn yhrem fleisch und kuennen yhnen nicht helfen*)...<sup>121</sup>

From an Augustinian perspective, sexual desire is connected to original sin, the fall of Adam and Eve, and the lustfulness they experienced as a consequence. Original sin caused a deformation of God's good creations, a corruption of both sexes.<sup>122</sup>

However, as can be read in the passage of *Sermons on Genesis* above, lust for Luther seems not to have been a premise but a consequence of the fall. Thus, the fall itself was a result of unbelief, which both men and women were capable of. Unbelief, the rejection of listening to God's word, was the first and gravest of

119 WA 12, 232–233. *Exhortation*.

120 WA 24, 90b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 134a, 134b, 135b.

121 WA 24, 91b. *Sermons on Genesis*. In WA 14, the equivalent passage says "...sentirent inobedientiam in omnibus membris..." WA 14, 135b.

122 Karant-Nunn 2008, 171, 174; Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 77.



sins, as Luther put it.<sup>123</sup> Only after committing the forbidden act, which fragmented the image of God in human beings, did lust become a part of human life. To feel lust was simultaneously a condition of lacking the word of God.<sup>124</sup> Hence, Luther departed from the tradition influenced by Augustine, which stressed that lust was the reason for the fall.<sup>125</sup> In terms of separating intercourse and desire, but also connecting them to the first sin and with each other, Luther's thinking was closely related to Augustinian thought, however.<sup>126</sup> Luther's harsh statements on the state of human beings after the fall were also in parallel with the Augustinian tradition.

Luther expressed lust as an opposition to joy (*lust*). He referred to sexual desire mostly with the words "evil desire" (e.g., *boeße lust*, *boesen luest*)<sup>127</sup> or "shameful desire" (*schendliche lust*)<sup>128</sup>. He used also the word *kuetzel*,<sup>129</sup> that is, "tickling" or "prickling," to describe lust. Lust appeared in Adam and Eve's minds and bodies when they noticed that they were naked. Luther understood sexual desire to be transmitted across the generations, and he blamed his contemporaries to be possessed by the same desire as that experienced by Adam and Eve.<sup>130</sup> Indeed, lust was such an integral part of people's lives post lapsum that only faith could recognize its horridness: "Where spirit is, one finds so much evil desire in the flesh (*so viel boese lust ym fleisch*) that ... he has to wish that the body was dead (*der leib tod were*)."<sup>131</sup>

The citation above does not require desire to be understood only as sexual, though that is the most obvious interpretation. Thus, lust or desire represented sexual desire for Luther in this context. One could say that in Luther's thinking, sexual desire had become a central part of reproduction, while lust in a broader sense was a quality of human nature that determined the whole of human life after the fall. Charles Cortright has made a similar argument in his doctoral dissertation: "The in-born, powerful sex drive is now infected with sin that exhibits itself in both men and women. Edenic sexuality has been turned into the passion (*libido*) of the flesh..."<sup>132</sup>

Risto Saarinen has used the opposition between harmful desires and inevitable natural desires in his study on the weakness of the will.<sup>133</sup> From my point of

123 WA 24, 85b–86b. (WA 14, 132b–133b.) *Sermons on Genesis*; Batka 2014, 247; Slenczka 2014, 216.

124 WA 24, 88b–89b. (WA 14, 133b–134b.) *Sermons on Genesis*. On Luther on faith and unbelief, see Mannermaa 2005; Bielfeldt & Mattox & Hinlicky 2008; Olli-Pekka Vainio 2010.

125 Bell 2005, 177; Batka 2014, 244. According to Batka, it was commonly held that the sin of luxuria was the first sin.

126 Juntunen 2010, 201; Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 35–36.

127 E.g., WA 10II, 383. *Little Prayer Book*; WA 24, 89b, 90b. (WA 14, 134b.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

128 WA 24, 91b. (WA 14, 135b.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

129 WA 24, 94b. (WA 14, 136b.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

130 WA 24, 90b–91b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 135a.

131 WA 24, 112b–113b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similar idea in WA 14, 149a, 149b.

132 Cortright 2011, 160–161. See also Gerle 2015, 137, 141–142 on the question.

133 Saarinen 2011, 125.

view, the concepts describe somewhat the same thing that is under discussion here. “Inevitable natural desires” could refer to sexual intercourse as God’s command. On the other hand, “harmful desires” seems to refer to lust as the consequence of the fall.

As the foregoing notions—of reproduction as God’s order per creation and lust as a consequence of the fall—further illustrate, sexual intercourse and sexual desire were two different things, albeit connected to each other, in Luther’s thought. The difference between the natural functions of the body (per creation) and the evil desires of the flesh (after the fall) is accentuated even more by Luther’s choice of concepts, especially in the passage quoted last, where he opposed not only spirit and flesh but also flesh and body. Hence, the body appears to be an innocent victim of the flesh, which carries sins and evils within it.

### FAILURE IN INNER CONTROL—NEED FOR OUTER CONTROL

In November 1520, Luther presented in *Freedom of a Christian* that monasteries—and, accordingly, brotherhoods of monks—should be places where the idea of people controlling their bodies reached a model example.<sup>134</sup> By the end of 1521, however, Luther’s tone had changed dramatically: in *On Monastic Vows* he claimed that there were none in the cloister who were devout, without “sacrilege and a blasphemous conscience (*sacrilega et blasphema conscientia*),” apart from a few miracles caused by God.<sup>135</sup>

During Luther’s residence at Wartburg Castle, there arose several practical situations in Wittenberg, about which Luther was informed, and which required action on the part of the leaders of the evangelical movement. Luther had not given practical guidelines for his coworkers regarding, for instance, cloister vows or marriage of clerics—the Scriptures were, in his opinion, clear enough to be used as guidelines in reforms. The unclear ecclesiastical-political situation and the lack of visible leadership within the evangelical movement led to various responses. Some, such as John Eberlin von Günzburg (c. 1470–1533), publicly demanded guidelines from Luther, whereas others, like Andreas Karlstadt, made their own conclusions based on Luther’s former writings and began to take their own courses of action.<sup>136</sup>

The marriages of three priests in the dioceses of Magdeburg and Meissen provoked a lively debate on clerical celibacy, and both Karlstadt and Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560) took part in it. Karlstadt did this, for example, by publishing several theses, which were published later as a book called *Super Coelibatu Monarchatu et Viduitate Axiomata perpensa Wuittembergae*. Also published was

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134 WA 7, 67. *Freedom of a Christian*.

135 WA 8, 619–620. *On Monastic Vows*.

136 Arffman 1985, 15; Plummer 2012, 62–63.

a German translation of Karlstadt's defense brief under the title *Das die Preester Eeweyber nemen mögen und sollen*.<sup>137</sup> During Luther's absence, Karlstadt and Melanchthon had been profiled not only as the leading figures of the evangelical movement but also as supporters of clerical marriage.<sup>138</sup>

Luther was kept informed of the situation via correspondence and he was not content, especially with Karlstadt's output.<sup>139</sup> The activity by Karlstadt forced him, however, to define his own position regarding cloister vows. In mid-August, he demanded his colleagues to slow their pace, but already in September he was ready to send his *Theses on Vows*<sup>140</sup> to Melanchthon, in order to reject both Melanchthon's and Karlstadt's reasoning with his own.<sup>141</sup> The treatise *On Monastic Vows* was published on the basis of the earlier theses.

In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther reminded that people whom he called the miracles caused by God were of an exceptional type—they were one in a thousand at most, and always a unique wonder of God.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, Luther presented these rare exceptions as continent due to a donated gift (*datum*) from God,<sup>143</sup> which emphasized the role of God in chastity instead of one's free choice. In his open letter to Leonard Koppe, a merchant from Torgau, Luther noted that it was impossible that chastity would have been as common as the cloister.<sup>144</sup> It was rather God's grace over human nature, as he maintained in *Against the Spiritual Estate*.<sup>145</sup>

An example of the exceptional type was a fictional virgin whom Luther quoted in *On Monastic Vows*:

Although I could marry, I am content to remain unmarried, not because it is commanded, not because it is advised, not because it is greater and more sacrificial than all other virtues, but because this seems to me to be the right way to live, just as marriage or farming may seem right to somebody else. I do not want the responsibilities of married life, I want to be free of responsibilities and have time for God.<sup>146</sup>

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137 Lindberg 1996, 98; Plummer 2012, 57, 63–65.

138 Plummer 2012, 57.

139 Plummer 2012, 63; Mikkola 2014b, 88–89. Luther's dissatisfaction is revealed in several of his letters. See, for instance, WA BR 2, no. 425. To Philipp Melanchthon (August 3, 1521); WA BR 2, no. 427. To Georg Spalatin (August 15, 1521); WA BR 2, no. 430. To Nikolaus von Amsdorf (September 9, 1521).

140 WA 8, 323–335. *Iudicium Martini Lutheri de votis*.

141 Mikkola 2014b, 92–93.

142 WA 8, 584. *On Monastic Vows*; see also WA 10II, 277, 279. *On Married Life*; Harrington 2005, 62–63.

143 WA 8, 666. For the rareness of the God-given gift of the mind over the body, that is, true chastity, see also WA BR 3, no. 766, 327. To three nuns (August 6, 1524); WA 11, 398. To Leonard Koppe. See also Karant-Nunn 2012a, 11.

144 WA 11, 398. To Leonard Koppe.

145 WA 10II, 156. *Against the Spiritual Estate*.

146 WA 8, 611–612. *On Monastic Vows*. Translation by James Atkinson.

In *On Married Life*, Luther called these exceptions to the rule “self-made eunuchs for heaven’s sake,”<sup>147</sup> who could be either women or men, and who had the ability to conquer the needs of their body with their mind. He praised them as “exalted, rich spirits, bridled by God’s grace...”<sup>148</sup> Their bodies were physically capable and outfitted for natural life in the flesh, but simultaneously their minds were strong enough to control lust, due to God’s gift of continence.<sup>149</sup> In practice, these eunuchs could choose between married life and celibacy, and they often chose the latter because of their desire to work on the gospel and produce spiritual children for God (*diße sprechen alßo: ‘Ich mocht und kund wol ehlich werden, aber es gelust mich nicht’*).<sup>150</sup>

Since chastity was a special gift from God, it could thus not be under the control of the human being himself. A fine example of Luther’s discussion is the following: “Namely, how can a celibate vow to be chaste if the thing absolutely is not or cannot be in his hands—when it [chastity] is only God’s gift, which a human being can receive, not offer?”<sup>151</sup> However, Luther seems to be somewhat inconsistent on the matter of promising chastity. In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther regarded, per Scripture, that it was crucial for chastity to be the free choice of a human being. Therefore, it seems that Luther held that a promise of chastity could be made if God granted it, but it could not be claimed to be a compulsory vow for all who were cloistered. He was, of course, referring to the few “one-in-a-thousand” exceptions, who could choose chastity due to a gift of continence from God.<sup>152</sup>

In light of this notion and the previous discussions in this study on the inevitability of bodily needs in Luther’s rhetoric, it seems quite surprising that in the case of exceptions he left open the possibility for certain persons to choose the cloister. It seems to leave room for an individual evaluation of one’s abilities to remain in the cloister, and it also does not particularly highlight God’s agency in giving the human being the datum of continence.

However, as Luther put it elsewhere in *On Married Life*, for most people the cloister vows involved promising something that was not in one’s control and thus actually not one’s own at all.<sup>153</sup> The majority of monks and nuns tried to live against

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147 The name referred to Matt. 19:12: “For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” In *On Monastic Vows* Luther presented the self-made eunuchs as continent due to a donated gift (*datum*) from God, which emphasizes the role of God instead of the human being’s free choice. WA 8, 666.

148 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 279. *On Married Life*.

149 The rich spirits are mentioned also, for example, in WA 8, 632. *On Monastic Vows*.

150 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 279. *On Married Life*.

151 WA 8, 658. See also WA 8, 659. *On Monastic Vows*; WA 11, 398. To Leonard Koppe.

152 WA 8, 579, 610, 654–655.

153 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 277, 284. *On Married Life*.

their physical nature and, as far as Luther was concerned, did not succeed.<sup>154</sup> A human being was meant for bodily life, and the effect of the fall had even reinforced that fact. Therefore, cloister vows could not be the means for controlling anyone who did not possess God's special gift.<sup>155</sup>

In addition to Luther, other figures of the early sixteenth century also partook in constructing the rhetoric about the extreme rarity of chastity. Erasmus of Rotterdam, for instance, considered that the capability to maintain celibate life was mainly a feature of the angels, as did John Calvin (1509–1564).<sup>156</sup> Bernard Rem, a member of one of the minor elite families in Augsburg whose daughter and two sisters were living in a convent,<sup>157</sup> wrote that cloistered life could not be that important—otherwise everyone would have had to become monks and nuns.<sup>158</sup>

Luther's societal solution after the denial of celibacy was presented in a simplistic way in *On Monastic Vows*: "There are women, there are men: marry, take a wife." He justified the exhortation with Paul's epistle<sup>159</sup> that defended the right to marry if one was not able to deal with the desires of one's body.<sup>160</sup> As Jane Strohl has maintained, Luther deemed not only Paul but also Jesus as a supporter of marriage, not celibate life, unless the question was genuinely of God's special calling to remain unmarried.<sup>161</sup> A model example of a married couple was, as Luther stated in *On Monastic Vows*, Abraham and Sarah.<sup>162</sup>

Steven Ozment has stated that the evangelicals were "faced with what they considered to be a crisis in domestic relations... To correct the situation, they exalted the patriarchal nuclear family as the liberation of men, women, and children from religious, sexual, and vocational bondage."<sup>163</sup> However, as some scholars have noted, it could well be argued that the emphasis on marriage by Luther and other

154 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 277. *On Married Life*; WA 12, 233. *Exhortation*. See also the summative discussion in Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 231–233.

155 I shall discuss these Luther's views in connection with masculinity and the medieval idea of clerical struggle in Chapter IV.

156 Harrington 2005, 63.

157 Chrisman 1996, 140, 148.

158 Harrington 2005, 62. Rem's writings from 1523 are summarized in Chrisman 1996, 148–151.

159 I Cor. 7:9: "However, if they cannot control themselves, they should get married, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

160 WA 8, 663. *On Monastic Vows*.

161 Strohl 2014, 372.

162 WA 8, 637. *On Monastic Vows*.

163 Ozment 1983, 6. Lyndal Roper, for her part, has been of the opinion that the most significant output of the evangelicals' claim was in practice that it mainly "gave voice to the interests and perceptions of the married craftsmen who ruled over their wives and organized the household's subordinate labour force of men and women." Roper 1989, 3. On the topic, see also Wunder 1998, 204–207. The differences of opinion between Ozment and Roper have been noted, for example, by Merry Wiesner-Hanks. See Wiesner-Hanks 2002, 609.

evangelical actors was the only possibility left after they had rejected the celibate ideal.<sup>164</sup> As Joel Harrington has pointed out, this explanation is simplistic, yet it captures the difficulties of the evangelicals: “The inherent sexual drive of all humans provided a foundation for marriage as the most natural state but still on a largely remedial basis. Very few reformers were able to absolve even marital sex of all sinful aspects...”<sup>165</sup>

Luther’s main aim in the beginning of the 1520s seems to have been to instead convince people to act according to their bodily needs and marry, rather than ponder the sinful aspects of marital sex. His rhetoric, aimed at convincing his readers of the supremacy of marriage, is clearly visible in the following passage of the *Exhortation*:

We were all created to do as our parents have done, to beget and rear children. This is by God laid out, commanded, and implanted in us, which is proved by our bodily members, daily emotions, and the example of the whole world.<sup>166</sup>

Harrington has noted that evangelical rhetoric denying celibacy was, on the whole, based primarily on three sources, which he has regarded as “typically Protestant”: biblical word, the doctrine of justification based solely on faith (*sola fide*), and the writers’ practical experience.<sup>167</sup> Similar sources had been used even before the sixteenth-century reforms, but in order to stress the value of marital life, as Harrington has also remarked.<sup>168</sup> In 1494, for example, Nicolaus de Blony<sup>169</sup> stated that marriage was to be regarded as a holy order, as it was “recommended [first] by Nature, then by scripture, and finally by the example of the saints.”<sup>170</sup>

Life in matrimony was for Luther the most natural for human beings,<sup>171</sup> and as such the demand was deduced straightforwardly from bodiliness. God’s order and the human body, especially the genitals, in addition to both contemporary and preceding generations, were fundamentals in Luther’s reasoning. Hence, his language was similar to, if not in some respect identical to, the notion of Nicolaus de Blony, for instance. That the need to marry was laid out and commanded by God was a clear reference to the Scriptures in his rhetoric. Bodily members, daily emotions, and examples in the world that proved his point were part of how he used

164 Originally noted in Harrington 2005, 64.

165 Harrington 2005, 65.

166 WA 12, 242. *Exhortation*.

167 Harrington 2005, 61. For the reasoning among the reformers for choosing marital life instead of the cloister, see also Karant-Nunn 2002, 436.

168 Harrington 2005, 59. See also Ozment 1983, 6–7.

169 De Blony was a Polish theologian, pastor, and canonist born possibly around 1438, and the author of *Tractatus sacerdotalis de sacramentis*. ADB 1886, 621.

170 Quoted in Harrington 2005, 59. Originally Nicolaus de Blony: *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis* (Strasbourg 1494), XIX (sermon for first Sunday after octave of Epiphany).

171 Cortright 2011, 151. See also Gerle 2015, 34; Wiesner-Hanks 2016, 6.

his practical experience as validation for his argument. The two first mentioned elements are similar to de Blony's statement of nature being one of the cornerstones in proving that marriage is the proper way of being a human. As my analysis in this and the foregoing sections of the chapter seeks to show, Luther's motivation to stress the importance of marriage originated, by and large, from the sources that Harrington has regarded to be typically evangelical.

## HUMAN BODY MISUSED: FORNICATION AND SECRET SINS

What precisely was the threat, then, that Luther explicated when he pondered if one should choose a married life instead of a virginal one? He portrayed the probable risks of cloistered life in *On Married Life*:

...it is impossible for you to remain righteous, for the Word of God which created you and said: "Be fruitful and multiply," abides and rules within you. You can by no means ignore it or you will be committing heinous sins without end. ... [T]hey [monks and nuns] will not remain pure and inevitably blemish themselves with secret sins or fornication. For they cannot [resist] God's word and their own nature.<sup>172</sup>

In the treatise to the Teutonic Knights as well, Luther considered that spiritual life in fact allows one to practice fornication (*hurerey*).<sup>173</sup>

The results of fornication were, as Luther put it, very grave. It first ruined the human soul and, thereafter, one's body. The body was consumed through the decay of flesh and blood, which polluted one's nature and physical health overall. After ruining both the soul and body, fornication destroyed one's possessions, honor, and family. The destruction of the human body, succeeded by the loss of one's property, honor, and family, was in most cases definitive, while one in a hundred at most could regain them. God punished whole communities for immorality by means of plagues, for instance. Drowning the world drowning in the Deluge or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah were biblical examples for Luther of the results of fornication. These consequences revealed God's attitude toward immorality.<sup>174</sup>

In addition to fornication, Luther also counted secret sins (*stummen sund*) among the most serious ways to misuse one's body.<sup>175</sup> In *Against the Spiritual Estate*, he put it bluntly:

172 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 277. *On Married Life*.

173 WA 12, 240. *Exhortation*.

174 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 299–300. *On Married Life*. The interconnection between human body, honor, and belongings can be also found, for instance, in Luther's letter to Frederick the Wise in 1521. WA BR 2, no. 371, 254. Reference to Sodom and Gomorrah also in WA 12, 237. *Exhortation*.

175 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276, 287. *On Married Life*. For sexuality and sin in the late medieval and early modern period, see, e.g., Ozment 1983; Brown 1986; Roper 1989; *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* 1996; Wiesner-Hanks 2010b.

Nature goes its own ways. Then rises the flood and the secret sin (*das fliessen unnd die heymliche sund*), which Saint Paul calls impurity and limpness. And I say crudely of the poor need's way, if it does not flow into the flesh, it flows into the shirt (*fleusset es nicht ynn das fleisch, ßo fleusset es ynß hembt*).<sup>176</sup>

His colleague, Justus Jonas (1493–1555), was of the same opinion: he regarded that marriage was the only means to resist secret sins.<sup>177</sup> Jonas was, in fact, among the first evangelical pastors to get married.<sup>178</sup>

In order to decipher what fornication and secret sins actually meant for Luther, one must survey the common meaning of the concepts. Lyndal Roper has been of the opinion that secret sin referred to masturbation, due to its private nature and absence of a second party, a victim.<sup>179</sup> In the medieval penitentials,<sup>180</sup> masturbation was often called “fornicating by oneself,” and in terms of transgressions it was rated as a lesser sin, along with seminal emissions and sexual intercourse between two unmarried people. Although masturbation did not harm another person, it was nevertheless considered as one of the most dreadful sins relative to the sinner himself.<sup>181</sup> According to Roper, “...it represented the epitome of sinfulness as a hidden state of mind, which demanded continual self-examination and constant confession...”<sup>182</sup>

I am of the same opinion as Jane E. Strohl that, although never discussing masturbation as such, Luther did make references to it when criticizing the monastic way of life.<sup>183</sup> It seems rather obvious that Luther referred especially to masturbation when discussing secret sin. His notion of the seminal flood that went into one's shirt if it did not go into the flesh points to seminal emissions in general and masturbation in particular. Also noteworthy is that in the very same passage, Luther used the concept of the flesh to describe the body of another person. This further supports the analysis made in the first section of this chapter, where I noted that the flesh as a concept was often for Luther something very practical and thus alluded to the literal human body.

Roper's notion of masturbation from the viewpoint of confession—namely, its wickedness is due to its being a secreted state of mind—is of interest concerning Luther and his continuous need to confess during his years as an Augustinian friar

176 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 156. *Against the Spiritual Estate*.

177 Plummer 2012, 136.

178 Jonas married the noblewoman Katharina Falk in February 1522. Lehmann 1963, 43; Plummer 2012, 136. The Jonas couple will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter VI.2.

179 Roper 1989, 65, 67.

180 Penitentials were manuals written for pastors as guidelines in private confessions. They contained lists of sins as well as proper punishments for them. See, e.g., Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 41.

181 Roper 1989, 65, 67; Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 41.

182 Roper 1989, 65.

183 See Strohl 2008, 136.



in the monastery. Knowledge and experience of struggles with one's desires and urges may be the basis of Luther's colorful discussion of the manners of misusing one's body. On the other hand, his rhetoric can be seen as part of the evangelical polemics representing cloistered life as something despicable, rather than as a direct reflection of his own struggles.

In the late medieval context, fornication seems to have been a more complex and diversified concept than secret sin, referring to various manifestations of human sexuality. Most commonly it meant either sex between unmarried persons—a particular threat for young people—or masturbation. In addition, it could refer to prostitution, heterosexual intercourse in unnatural positions and/or during restricted times, *coitus interruptus*, or, in some cases, female homosexuality.<sup>184</sup>

According to Judith Brown, there indeed was a possibility for sexual relations to develop in a convent (for instance, between a nun and a priest visiting on official matters). Same-sex relations could also occur. Brown has argued that certain rules and prohibitions were imposed particularly against same-sex relations, such as restrictions concerning sleeping together or building special friendships, or orders to leave the cell doors unlocked during the night. Brown has even claimed that “convents were notorious for their loose moral standards and for their sexual license.”<sup>185</sup> Brown's statement seems to be somewhat exaggerated. A significant part of the female population in Germany, for example, lived in convents—in several cities about five to ten percent of women were cloistered.<sup>186</sup> It is difficult to believe that widespread immorality would have been practiced among such a great number of women and, further, that it would have been tolerated by the contemporaries.

The most commonly used context for the idea of fornication seems to have been heterosexual, premarital intercourse.<sup>187</sup> Paul Hinlicky has noted that for Luther, fornication was “the violence to which repression and the denial of death succumb, exploitative sexual activity.”<sup>188</sup> Hinlicky's statement targets the level of principle. Although it does not illuminate fornication as a practical concept by any means, it leaves room for pondering which forms of sexual misuse were exploitative, for instance. Therefore, Hinlicky's depiction remains more of a philosophical argument.

On a very practical level, Luther alluded to fornication as premarital sexual relations in general. When using the concept of fornication in *On Married*

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184 Ozment 1983, 149–150; Brown 1986, 16–17; Roper 1989, 112.

185 Brown 1986, 4, 8.

186 Skocir & Wiesner-Hanks 2010, 12.

187 Ozment 1983, 149–150; Brundage 1987, 205; Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 64; Plummer 2012, 170.

188 Hinlicky 1988, 526.

*Life*, Luther was discussing monks and nuns—parading examples of unmarried people—who could not control their lust. Despite the context, on the basis of Luther's discussions one cannot make a conclusion, however, that Luther primarily thought of fornication in terms of same-sex sexual relations.

Furthermore, fornication was connected to both the body and soul but also to salvation in Luther's thoughts, as the text of *On Married Life* proves. It was an element where mental, physical, and spiritual were interrelated. Thus, the idea of a reciprocal relationship between the spirit, soul, and body was applied by Luther in this context also. This interrelationship was partly based on the fall and its result, lust. As I have pointed out, in Luther's rhetoric, lust was a sensation linked to every human being after the fall. Accordingly, lust dwelled in the human soul before one committed the actual sin of fornication. Since fornication harmed the human soul in the first place, and one's body only thereafter, it can be seen as first and foremost a sin that originated in the human mind. I have noted before that, according to Luther, there was an equal possibility of the body and soul being the source of evil within a human being. On the basis of this section, it seems that the dwelling place of evil was, at least in the cases discussed, particularly in the human soul. To put it another way, evil originated not in one's body but in one's mind.

According to Meri Heinonen, in late medieval discourse human actions were something that either sanctified or polluted one's body. Heinonen has tied these notions to a discussion of negative and positive corporality: the human body could be a hindrance or alternatively a tool for spiritual progress. Thus, it was not inherently good or bad but was defined through its actions.<sup>189</sup> For their part, these actions were dependent on one's mental processes. This understanding can also be found in Luther's work. The bodily destruction that Luther referred to when describing the results of fornication seems to allude to physical sicknesses, even death. One's sinful mental state was thus what led to the misuse one's body, thereby harming that body in a profound way. In this respect, Luther's notions fit well into late medieval discourse. Physical diseases were often seen as consequences of sin, with spiritual and physical being in tandem.<sup>190</sup>

Thus, in Luther's thinking as well as that of his predecessors, sin affected not only one's salvation but also one's body and mundane life as a whole. This notion is similar to Luther's examination of life in the flesh, for in both examples he connected the body with everything in a human being's life, interior and exterior. It seems that Luther considered it a matter of choice whether one would ruin one's soul, along with body, for perpetuity. The question is similar to that of daring to act in accordance with God's word, which was discussed in the first section of this

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189 Heinonen 2007, 83–84.

190 Gilchrist 1996, 48. For the same topic, see also Shahar 1996, 164.

chapter. Even though Luther explicitly stressed the impossibility of a human being to make choices—that is, one is denied free will in matters of bodily functions and urges—he was not as definite in regard to this question when the implicit level of his rhetoric is examined.

## KILLING THE BODY THROUGH ADULTERY

This section shall decipher further Luther's treatment on the misuse of the human body. Several grave sins were connected to the human body and its misuse in Luther's thinking. Besides fornication and secret sin, discussed in the former section, adultery (*ehebruch*) offers an interesting perspective on Luther's discussion of human bodiliness. In this section, I shall thus analyze how Luther considered adultery from the viewpoint of the human body.

In his treatise to the *Christian Nobility*, Luther counted adultery among the grave sins of blasphemy and murder, for instance.<sup>191</sup> Likewise, in *Against the Spiritual Estate* he paralleled adultery with idolatry.<sup>192</sup> It was a ground for divorce (*die ehe tzureysen*).<sup>193</sup> Joel Harrington has noted that the ecclesiastical authorities had punished adulterers with separation already before the evangelicals began to introduce their views. Although the punishment was directed at the guilty person, in practice it did not allow the injured party to remarry either.<sup>194</sup>

Perhaps targeting his critique at this custom, in the *Exhortation* Luther noted that even though adultery was a grave sin, it was not punished properly by the authorities—rather it usually went unpunished.<sup>195</sup> In *On Married Life* and the *Babylonian Captivity*, he cited Christ's words in Matthew,<sup>196</sup> concluding that Christ allowed divorce in the case of adultery.<sup>197</sup> By thus interpreting Matthew 1:19, for instance, Luther considered two options to be appropriate for the betrayed party, namely, the husband. He could punish the deceitful spouse in secret and continue the marriage (*seyn weyb heymlich und bruderlich straffe und behalte ßo sie sich bessern wil*).<sup>198</sup> Alternatively, he could do as Joseph had intended to do with Mary: to send her away in secrecy (*er sie lasse, wie Joseph thun wolt*).<sup>199</sup> Betrayed wives should act in the same manner with deceitful husbands, Luther noted (*widerumb*

191 WA 6, 467. *Christian Nobility*.

192 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 146. *Against the Spiritual Estate*.

193 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 287. *On Married Life*.

194 Harrington 2005, 88.

195 WA 12, 243. *Exhortation*. For the actual punishments, see, e.g., Rublack 1998, 220–224.

196 Compare Matthew 5:32; 19:3–12.

197 WA 6, 559. *Babylonian Captivity*; WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 287–288. *Estate of Marriage*.

198 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 288. *On Married Life*.

199 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 288. *On Married Life*.

*das weyb auch alßo*).<sup>200</sup> In case of continuation of marriage, the adulterer should repent by living as a proper Christian. If the adulterer was deserted and could not live chastely, he should in Luther's opinion be killed, as the Scriptures commanded in Deuteronomy.<sup>201</sup> If the death penalty was not put into effect, the adulterer had at least to leave not only his home but also his homeland. These courses of action applied to both sexes, that is, adulterers (*ehbrecher*) and adulteresses (*ehbrecherynn*).<sup>202</sup>

Certain crimes were seen as gender-related in the Germany of Luther's time. Men were punished most often for fighting or disorderly conduct, while women's indictments were usually connected with sexuality. As regards adultery, women were often considered its initiators.<sup>203</sup> In fact, according to interpretations by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities until the Late Middle Ages, adultery was regarded merely as a female offense "committed by a married woman with an outsider."<sup>204</sup> The traditional prerogative of the husband to kill his wife due to adultery was supported by several criminal codes of the sixteenth century.<sup>205</sup> In Augsburg, cases of sexual offenses made up almost half of the crimes committed by women. For example, a man accused of rape could defend himself by claiming seduction rather than rape, mentioning that he did not see any signs of resistance. The court's attention was thereby directed to the sexual behavior of the woman. Roper remarks that chastity and modesty belonged to the behavior increasingly expected of women in the sixteenth century.<sup>206</sup> As Susan Karant-Nunn has noted, in cases of sexual offenses "there were no innocent parties"—even if, for instance, the victim of rape was a child.<sup>207</sup> Furthermore, if the victim became pregnant it could prove the accusation of rape to be false, as it was often held female pleasure needed to have taken place for conception to occur.<sup>208</sup>

Taking the gender-relatedness of crimes and the tendency to accuse women of sexual offenses into account, it is noteworthy that Luther did not sexualize the crime of adultery by implying that women were the main culprits. Instead, he did the opposite; while the Scriptures spoke in the feminine about an "adulteress," Lut-

200 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 289. *On Married Life*.

201 Deut. 22:22: "If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel."

202 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 289. *On Married Life*.

203 Roper 1989, 82–83; Rublack 1998, 220. See also the discussion in Karant-Nunn 1982, 31–32.

204 Harrington 2005, 126 (esp. fn. 90), 226; Lidman 2008, 325, esp. fn. 860. Adultery as specifically a female offense was a long-standing view since the Early Middle Ages at the latest. Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 39.

205 Such as the *Bambergensis* (1507) and *Carolina Constitutio Criminalis* (1532). Harrington 2005, 227; Karant-Nunn 2012a, 22. However, as Harrington points out, in some areas men were accused of adultery even more often than women.

206 Roper 1989, 82–84.

207 Karant-Nunn 1982, 32.

208 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 101; 2011, 65.

her himself used the masculine counterpart, “adulterer.”<sup>209</sup> Luther’s language can thus be seen as an example of how he disentangled himself from the view of the Scriptures, the attitudes of society, and the interpretation of the law.

Luther’s argument for the death penalty as a punishment for adultery, for its part, seems to have been related to the interconnection between sexes but also to his perception of the human body. Luther considered that both wives and husbands reciprocally gave their bodies to each other when getting married. Conjugal duty or debt<sup>210</sup> was binding for both spouses and related to a biblical understanding of giving one’s body to the other. Citing Paul<sup>211</sup> in this, Luther stated: “...by the marriage vow each submits his body to the other to conjugal duty (*ym verlobniß gibt eyns dem andern seynen leyb tzum ehlichen dienst*).”<sup>212</sup>

Thus, one did not own one’s body after giving it to the other. Luther clarified his point of view: “...he has given himself to her and belongs no longer to himself (*er hatt sich yhr ergeben und ist nicht mehr seyn selbst*)...”<sup>213</sup> The idea of conjugal debt, the reciprocal sexual obligation of wife and husband, was an integral part of the medieval Christian concept of marriage.<sup>214</sup> Therefore, Luther was exploiting imagery that was already commonly in use during his time. Conjugal debt was such a binding duty in Luther’s rhetoric that giving oneself up to an extramarital sexual relationship signified giving up one’s life altogether: Luther considered the adulterer to be dead even before the possible death penalty. As he put it, “the one who breaks his marriage has already departed [from life] (*hat sich schon selbst gescheyden*) and has the worth of a dead person.”<sup>215</sup>

The members of German society did support the death penalty for adulterers in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Their position was based on legal precedent that belonged to patriarchal moralism, which sustained the view of the man’s right over the body of his wife and sometimes led to an adulterous wife being

209 See Luther’s discussion in WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 288–289. *On Married Life*.

210 Luther uses at least three terms alternately in *On Married Life* when speaking of conjugal duty: *ehepflicht*, *ehliche pflicht* and *ehlichen dienst*.

211 I Cor. 7:4–5: “The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

212 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 290. *On Married Life*. I have translated *verlobniß* as “marital vow,” since it was often used in the meaning of *eheliche verlobung* rather than necessarily in the sense of engagement that preceded the actual marriage vow. The question of the proper translation of the word is closely tied to the late medieval marital discussion of *verba de presenti* and *verba de futuro*. For the distinction, see, e.g., Harrington 2005, 30, 55–57, 92 *et passim*.

213 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 286. *On Married Life*.

214 Green 2011, 186–187.

215 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 289. *On Married Life*. The German word *scheyden* means both to dissolve a marriage and to depart from life, that is, to die.

killed.<sup>216</sup> However, the authorities often favored lighter measures as well, as Ulinka Rublack has pointed out in relation to the latter half of the sixteenth century.<sup>217</sup> Luther's suggestion of a death penalty was only a step forward from the idea of "dying" in the conjugal relationship, as Jorma Laulaja has regarded. Luther's justification was thus primarily communal: adultery was a threat to communal identity based on the nature of conjugal relationships, and therefore the authorities were obliged to kill the adulterer as a communal security measure.<sup>218</sup>

From the standpoint of the gender system, the case of adultery shows that Luther held a more equal view of women and men in this context than many of his contemporaries. The shared life of a woman and a man was for Luther life in the flesh which bound both of them. This sharing included most importantly a physical sphere, yet not only that, as I have noted in the previous chapter. Luther's emphasis on adultery as commensurate with other sins that were violations against God, such as idolatry and blasphemy, becomes understandable specifically in the context of his emphasis on God's will and order. Through adultery, one not only broke off the natural companionship of man and woman but acted against one of God's primary orders concerning human life. In addition, the adulterer claimed rights for the body that was regarded as the possession of his spouse. Going one step further in this reading, one can say that even though the human body was very concrete, being the personal part of a human being for Luther, it was also something non-literal and, as such, it was capable of being shared and possessed—even by others.

Caroline Walker Bynum has been of the opinion regarding medieval thinkers in general that they did not essentialize the body in the sense of understanding it primarily as matter. Rather, "philosophically speaking, body as subsisting was always form as well as matter."<sup>219</sup> In Luther's rhetoric, therefore, the human body was something factual, although at the same time it was discursively constructed. According, amongst other things, it could belong to another person through a promise. In this line of thought, Luther in fact came close to the idea of a cloister vow, which was also based on verbal promise that bound the factual body in the service of God. According to Luther's reasoning, however, promising one's body for the sake of celibacy was impossible, while promising the body for sexual relations in matrimony was not only unavoidable but also irrevocable. Luther's sociopolitical motives were significant behind his understanding. The idea of body as factual, on the one hand, and subordinate, being framed and constructed by words, on the other, reveals that Luther's view of the body was not merely—or perhaps even primarily—essentialist.

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216 Roper 1989, 72.

217 Rublack 1998, 220–224.

218 Laulaja 1981, 82–83.

219 Bynum 1995b, 17.

In sum, Luther treated human bodiliness both from the viewpoint of natural bodily needs and functions and from the point of view of sin, whose origin was not in the body itself but which nonetheless affected the body in a most profound way. The natural functions of the body were not a matter of denial, and neither was lust within a human being. In Luther's view, the impossibility of bodily control was the given state of a human being in the post-lapsarian world. During this period, his rhetoric concerning the human body was instead filled with images that linked it with sexual activity.

The reason for this can be seen as largely due to the general atmosphere and contemporary theological discussion in the beginning of the 1520s. In Luther's thinking, the urges of a human being in the post-lapsarian world were to be channelled properly, or else they led to problems of the body, soul, and spirit but also social relations. In a world of fallen humankind, sexual desire could lead one to misuse the body in terrible ways. Fornication, masturbation, and adultery were, according to Luther, a factual threat for every human being. At the same time, he thought that the human being's duty to procreate had become more important after the fall than before.

Cortright has aptly noted: "Luther seemingly never misses a chance to state the importance of procreation!"<sup>220</sup> This emphasis is deeply connected with Luther's social-political conclusion of the proper way to be a member of society. In practice, it meant stressing marriage as the only possible scenario for the lives of men and women, and it also justified Luther's critiques toward the cloister. A similar policy definition of marriage was current among other evangelicals as well. Luther's way of presenting the proper Christian life thus mirrored one of the main themes of the evangelical critics.

Merry Wiesner-Hanks has noted that the evangelicals were constructing their "marriage patterns" on the basis of former views and, consequently, they did not introduce anything particularly new aside from clerical marriage.<sup>221</sup> In itself, marriage was nonetheless an essential theological question for the evangelicals, as Scott Hendrix has pointed out:

Just as the concept of universal priesthood elevated lay Christians to the spiritual status that had been reserved for clergy, the designation of marriage as the truly religious order elevates it to the spiritual status that had been reserved for the celibate members of the priesthood and monastic orders.<sup>222</sup>

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220 Cortright 2011, 171.

221 Wiesner-Hanks 2016, 1–2.

222 Hendrix 2000, 338. The same passage is noted also in Wiesner-Hanks 2016, 8.

To beyond Hendrix's statement, moving from theology to anthropology, clerical marriage is actually a key theme from the viewpoint of Luther's idea of the human being.

As Luther put it, the means of bodily control in the cloister were fundamentally unsuccessful since the restrictions went against human nature. Hence, Luther's demands of a new clerical way of life essentially concerned the human body and the human being's proper way of being. Together with his coworkers, setting aside the previous ideal and adopting a new one, Luther was developing anthropology. The next chapters shall shed light on the obvious questions of how Luther treated human bodiliness from a gendered viewpoint, and how he constructed feminine and masculine ways of being and the gender system in different historical and textual contexts.



### III CONSTRUCTION OF THE FEMALE BODY AND FEMININITY

In this part of the study, I will explore how the female body and way of being were constructed in Luther's texts. In what contexts and through which means did he define femininity and the female body? My point of departure is that even though Luther was discussing real female bodies, the outcome of his discussion in effect entailed a discursively constructed body. Furthermore, I assume that there was not one but a host of constructed female bodies in Luther's discourse. In this way, I agree with several feminist historians who regard that the female body is not an ahistorical entity but a construction produced by religious, social, and political values and norms, and by the gender system.<sup>1</sup>

The chapter discusses the premises of defining femininity and the female body in Luther's texts in the period of the early 1520s. It poses the question of how female bodiliness affected a woman's proper way of being and her relation to man in Luther's thinking. My hypothesis is that fundamentally the female represented otherness for Luther. To find out the basis of Luther's views on the female and her body, one has to look especially into his interpretation of the origins of woman as presented in the text of Genesis. Thus, the two first sections of the chapter focus particularly on Luther's Sermons on Genesis, although other texts are used as well to broaden the picture. The biblical women Eve and Mary are discussed from the perspective of lived bodiliness. The second section addresses the question of the consequences that a woman must face should she refuse her proper, secondary place in relation to man.

I also concentrate on the ideal that necessarily resulted from Luther's discussions on the woman's body, that is, motherhood. I discuss motherhood from the viewpoint of norms of mothering that Luther deciphered, and in the second section I consider the traditions on which he based his views. Third section shall discuss a disruption of the ideal womanhood.

The third section extends the subject by bringing to the fore the practical side of Luther's discussion of, and specifically with, women. Through various practical situations, I look at how he reacted to female contemporaries. The chapter argues that in spite of Luther's judgment of women as secondary in theory, in practice he deemed them to be valuable contacts and serious partners of conversation.

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1 For the relationship between "real bodies" and constructed bodies, see for instance Lochrie 1991, 3, 15 *et passim*. For the criticism of taking only the constructed body seriously in feminist research, see, e.g., Roper 2012, 6–7.

## 1. LIVED BODILINESS: CREATED FOR SUBORDINATION

### MERELY THE RIB? WOMAN AS THE SUBORDINATE “OTHER”

According to Luther’s interpretation of Genesis 1 in the Sermons on Genesis, the process of the creation of a human being (*ein mensch*) began with the forming of the male body. Man was created from earth: “From that kind of loose soil He [God] took a roll and made the human being (*den menschen*) of it.”<sup>2</sup> The other human being, the woman (*ein weib*), was created from the rib of the man, as the text of Genesis describes. Luther noted that the creation of the woman was described by use of the word “to build” (*bawen*), the same word employed in contexts of building houses. Luther interpreted the meaning of this passage according to Paul, that is, as a reference to the union of man and wife.<sup>3</sup> Instead of using the verb “to build” for the female, however, Luther himself used both “to make” (*machen*) and “to create” (*schaffen*), that is, the very same verbs he used to describe the creation of the male.<sup>4</sup>

By interpreting the second story of creation, which modern scholarship refers to as the Yahwist version,<sup>5</sup> Luther described the need for another, female body:

Now when everything that lives had been created, God brought them to Adam so that he would name them. But among all of them he found no helper for himself. And this is as much to say: God saw that Adam alone was an image of a man (*ein mans bilde*). Now He had created all the animals, both female and male, and brought all the animals, female and male, to Adam, but he did not find his her, or partner. Our text says “help similar to himself,” but it should be called “in the presence of him,” that is, help in begetting. There was no animal that would have done this to him...<sup>6</sup>

The same reasoning concerning gender hierarchy can be detected, for instance, in a letter to three nuns from August 1524:

God created her [a woman’s] body to be with a man, bear children and raise them, as Scripture makes clear in Genesis 1. Her bodily members, ordained by God for this, also demonstrate this. This is as natural as eating and drinking, sleeping and waking up. ... Therefore one should be contented and not be ashamed, for God created and made them [women] for this.<sup>7</sup>

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2 WA 24, 66b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 119a.

3 WA 24, 78b. (WA 14, 126a.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

4 WA 24, 78b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 126b.

5 Green 2009, 11.

6 “Da nu alles was da lebet geschaffen war, bracht sie Gott zu Adam, das er sie nennet, Aber unter den allen fand er keinen gehuelffen umb yhn, Und ist soviel gesagt: Gott sahe Adam an, das er allein ein mans bilde war, Nu hatte er alle thier geschaffen, beyde Sie und Er, Da bracht er alle thier, Sie und Er, zu Adam, Aber seine Sie odder geferten fand er nicht. Unser Text liesset ‘Adiutorium simile ei’, Es solt aber heissen ‘Coram eo’, id est: adiutorium ad generationem, Es war kein thier das sich zu yhm gethan hette...” WA 24, 76b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 125a–126a, 125b–126b.

7 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327. To three nuns (August 6, 1524). Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

Luther's exegesis of the text of Genesis rested upon the insight that the creation of the female began with the need of man. His work thus implies that a man *per se* was a sufficient representative of humankind and that the need for a companion was merely for reproduction.

This insight is especially revealed in Luther's exegesis of the Latin words *adiutorium simile ei* ("help similar to himself"), which gained meaning for him only in the reproductive sense: "Women have been created for no other purpose than to serve man and to be his help in conceiving."<sup>8</sup> As John Thompson has maintained, biblical words about the woman as the helper of the man signified for the sixteenth-century reformers, as it had to their predecessors, "her secondary status." Thompson has further noted that the woman's position as helper was most often understood by both patristic and medieval thinkers mainly in the context of reproduction.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Luther seems to have followed the common views on this matter.<sup>10</sup>

In the same context, Luther stated: "And it is decided that a woman (*weib*) has been created to be a helper for the human being (*des menschen*)."<sup>11</sup> In the manuscript of the Sermons, the equivalent passage goes: "Woman has been created purposefully, to be help to man, not in [the purpose of] pleasure (*mulier creata est finaliter, ut sit adiutorium viro, non ad delectationem*)."<sup>12</sup> The manuscript thus speaks of woman and man, whereas the printed version speaks of woman and human being.

Luther's use of the word "human being" (*mensch*) obviously referred in the foregoing passages only to the male sex. This can be explained by the order of creation in the text of Genesis—man as the first human being was indeed the human being. In the manuscripts of the *Sermons*, Luther explained that Adam in Hebrew was *mensch* in German.<sup>13</sup> A similar interpretation is evident in Luther's sermon concerning the *Marital Estate*, wherein he talked about "Christians and Christian women (*Christen und Christliche Weiber*)"<sup>14</sup> as two separate things—with man being the norm, woman the other. For Luther, "man" signified the same as "human being," while "woman" was something that was created in addition to the primary human being. This nuance is somewhat missing, however, in the manuscripts that discuss *mulier* as opposed to *vir*, not *mulier* as opposed to *homo*.

8 WA 24, 79b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 126a–127a: "...homo utatur femina non ad voluptatem tatem, sed ad generationem." Calvin, for instance, made a similar statement when commenting on I Cor. 11:10 and I Tim. 2:12 by noting that a woman was born to succumb and to obey. See Thompson 1988, 140.

9 Thompson 2009, 514–515.

10 In his later years, the emphasis had somewhat changed as Luther began to count mutual affection, among others, as a factor in being a helper. See Thompson 2009, 515.

11 WA 24, 78b–79b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

12 WA 14, 126b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

13 WA 14, 125a, 125b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

14 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 25. *Marital Estate*.

The same lack of opposition and hierarchy is evident also in *On Married Life*, wherein Luther briefly discussed creation. He noted that the human being was created and divided into two sexes: man and woman (*gott die menschen ynn die tzwey teyll geteylet hatt, das es man und weyb odder eyn He und Sie seyn soll*).<sup>15</sup> The difference in treating creation and in using concepts describing the human being, as well as the juxtaposition of the sexes that appears in part of the sources, is probably due to the different genres of the texts.

The second story of creation, the so-called Yahwist version, was in much more regular use by both patristic and medieval commentators than the first story of creation, the Priestly one, where the creation of both sexes is depicted as concurrent.<sup>16</sup> In the *Sermons of Genesis*, Luther put more weight on the Yahwist version, where the man is created first. In *On Married Life*, on the contrary, Luther alluded to creation only in terms of the Priestly version. Why may he have done so?

Rüdiger Schnell has analyzed the significance of the context of the way in which women were discussed, especially in the medieval era. According to Schnell, it is important to note whether the question was of *Frauendiskurs* or of *Ehediskurs*. By discourse on women, he means androcentric, scholarly discussion, which is often colored by misogyny. By discourse on marriage, he is referring to pastoral texts, which focus not only the weak points of women but also those of men. Accordingly, the norms that were created for both sexes and their relations were not dependent solely on the current social reality, as Schnell points out, but also and especially on contextual factors.<sup>17</sup> D. H. Green has summarized Schnell's view by listing the most important examples: type of communication (oral or written), audience (only men or both men and women; different social groups), language (Latin for clerics, vernacular for the laity), and function (academic or pragmatic).<sup>18</sup>

Luther wrote *On Married Life* for pastors who faced marital problems in their everyday work, but it can be seen that Luther directed the text at a lay audience, particularly married couples, as well. It was thus written for pastoral purposes in German, obviously—if we make use of Schnell's dichotomy—as part of *Ehediskurs*. Consequently, he was not inclined to dismiss or revile women. The *Sermons on Genesis*, however, offer a slightly more complicated picture. The manuscripts collected by Luther's hearers were written down both in Latin and in German, and the later printed version also appeared in both languages, as I have noted in my introduction. The nature of the sermons as being first and foremost an exegetical analysis of the Bible—thus having scholarly emphasis—explains Luther's decision

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15 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 275. *On Married Life*.

16 Green 2009, 11.

17 Schnell 1998, esp. 282–283. See also Wiesner 2002, 154–155.

18 Green 2009, 7.

to highlight the Yahwist version in his exegesis. In this way, one could say that the discourse was *Frauendiskurs* rather than *Ehediskurs* in the *Sermons*, where Luther's approach was not pastoral but academic.

Can the difference between the emphases of the manuscripts, on the one hand, and the printed sermons, on the other, be explained with Schnell's formulation of various contextual factors? The manuscripts that lack the opposition between woman and human being were based on oral sermons whose hearers could supposedly vary, according to social standing and gender, for instance. The printed version, which entailed the opposition of woman and human being, could also have been used in both academic and pragmatic contexts, by clerics and laity alike. Thus, there is not much difference in the sources in terms of their language, audience, or probable. I believe that the only essential difference between the manuscripts and the printed sermons was the type of original communication: oral in the first case, written in the latter. This does not suffice to explain the difference in Luther's way of discussing women—unless we suppose that the printed version was produced especially with a male, scholarly audience in mind. Nor does it answer the question of Luther's most authentic voice. As this question cannot be properly solved, it must be left open and noted that in terms of the *Sermons*, Luther could treat women as opposed to men in one context and as opposed to human beings in the other. Thus, it seems that implicitly, depending on the context, he could count women among humanity or leave them outside, as it were.

Some of Luther's letters also imply an understanding of the woman as merely a part of the man. In a letter to Philipp Melanchthon in May 1521, which Luther sent from Wartburg Castle, he paid his respects to Melanchthon's wife: "...and farewell to your flesh (*ac vale cum carne tua*)."<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in a letter to Nicholas Gerbel (c. 1485–1560) from May 1524, Luther's greetings were the following: "Be continuously saved along with your rib (*cum costa tua*)..."<sup>20</sup> These metaphors were reminders of the woman's origin, put in the context of everyday life. They may have been used by Luther to highlight the gender hierarchy,<sup>21</sup> to imply an aspect of companionship in his colleagues' marriages,<sup>22</sup> or both. To what extent this kind of metaphor was in common use in the correspondence of Luther's contemporaries, I have not been able to determine.

At any rate, the viewpoint of gender hierarchy is more readily found in Luther's texts than the idea of companionship. In *On Monastic Vows*, for instance, he

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19 WA BR 2, no. 407, 333. To Philipp Melanchthon (May 12, 1521). Melanchthon had married Katharina Krapp on November 27, 1520.

20 WA BR 3, no. 739, 284. To Nicholas Gerbel (May 24, 1524).

21 For the idea of the rib emphasizing the gender hierarchy in Christian tradition, see, e.g., Tuana 1993, 56, 157, 159 *et passim*; Bynum 1995, 17.

22 For the idea of companionship, see, e.g., Thompson 2009, 512.

described the woman's proper way of being in the fallen world in terms of hierarchy, noting that a corporal kind of obedience (*obedientia corporalis*) was the part equally of wives, children, servants, and captives.<sup>23</sup> In other words, the proper female way of being was to be subordinate to the man. It is worth noting, however, that in the next sections Luther did not treat the obedience of wives but the obedience of spouses (*obedientia coniugis*) and marital obedience (*obedientia coniugal*).<sup>24</sup> It is possible that he regarded marital obedience as binding both sexes, as suggested by my former analysis in Chapter II.2 on giving one's body to the other. Nevertheless, due to the specific notion of wives in the former section, it is likely that Luther meant wives only with in the latter cases as well.

Luther also emphasized gender hierarchy and the substantial difference between the sexes by using a metaphor of the sun and the moon: "The sun cannot say: I want to be the moon, and vice versa, the moon cannot make itself be the sun."<sup>25</sup> In *On Married Life* he stressed quite similarly:

...each one of us must have the kind of body God has created for us (*iglichen got seynen leyb geschaffen hat*). I cannot make myself a woman, nor can you make yourself a man; we do not have that power. But we are exactly as He created us...<sup>26</sup>

Luther's colleague Justus Jonas, for instance, used somewhat similar wording in 1523 regarding the impossibility of reversing one's sex.<sup>27</sup> By comparing gender hierarchy, which was imposed already in creation, to natural law or to the macrocosm itself, Luther alluded to the impossibility of acting against proper gender roles.<sup>28</sup> It was indeed quite common to see the microcosm as a mirror of the macrocosm, as Heide Wunder has maintained. The emphasis was not always merely on the hierarchical relationship between woman and man, or moon and sun, but also on their relationship as lovers and partners who were different and yet complementary to each other.<sup>29</sup>

The hierarchy of the sexes was emphasized by Luther not only through the literal aspect of a certain sex, as seen in the passages above, but also by means of cultural-religious justification: the woman could not hear the words of God wi-

23 WA 8, 645. *On Monastic Vows*.

24 WA 8, 646–647. *On Monastic Vows*.

25 WA 24, 53b. (WA 14, 112b.) *Sermons on Genesis*. Luther also used the image of the sun and the moon in his latter productions, especially in the lectures of Genesis. Kristen E. Kvam has regarded the metaphor as "perhaps most infamous" of Luther's figures of speech. Kvam 2004, 14.

26 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276. *On Married Life*. Similar reasoning in WA 24, 53b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 115a.

27 Swanson 1999, 177.

28 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 275–276, 293. *On Married Life*; WA 24, 52b–53b, 53a. (WA 14, 111b–112b.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

29 Wunder 1998, 205–206. The mirroring between micro- and macrocosms was also made via the four elements and bodily humors. Kambaskovic 2017, 40.

thout the man, as Luther put it in the *Sermons*.<sup>30</sup> Mickey Mattox has stated that the idea of the man as the head of the woman was connected to Paul's reasoning<sup>31</sup> in Luther's exegesis concerning the original subordination of the woman. Luther justified female subordination with the notion that *mandatum divinum*, the divine command, was given only to the man in paradise.<sup>32</sup>

Mattox has further proposed that in the beginning of the 1520s, Luther had a "remarkably traditional and socially conservative picture"<sup>33</sup> of the woman's subjection to the man.<sup>34</sup> This subjection was verified by her birth from the male substance. According to both Mattox and Theo Bell, Luther already presented the woman as subordinate to the man, per creation, in the *Sermons on Genesis*, which was still in accord with theological tradition.<sup>35</sup> For example, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), like other medieval theologians, regarded both creation and the fall as the cause of gender hierarchy.<sup>36</sup>

This notion is supported not only by the analyses made in this chapter thus far, but also by a passage from the *Sermons* that discusses the issue:

...she does not live according to her own free will. [Without the fall] it would have been such that they [Adam and Eve] might have gone their separate ways, one here, the other somewhere else, though in moderation. But now the wife can undertake nothing without the husband. Wherever he is, she has to be with him, and humble herself before him.<sup>37</sup>

The authority of a woman over her body and life had narrowed to non-existent *post lapsum*, while the control of the man over the woman was augmented. In the post-lapsarian world, men were supposed to be the masters of women at home but also in society. In contrast, a woman's duty was to show her obedience not only

30 WA 24, 71b–72b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 130b, 133b. Luther thereby acknowledged, according to theological tradition, priesthood and preaching only to the male sex per creation. Mattox 2003a, 55; Mattox 2003b, 460–461. Gottfried Maron has treated Luther's views on common priesthood, suggesting that the exclusion of the female sex from professional priesthood was a question more of retaining social order than of divine command. Maron cites this in his article to Ernst Wolf's address: "Einen ausschluss der Frau vom geistlichen Amt nach göttlichem Recht kennt er [Luther] jedenfalls nicht." Maron 1983, 280–281. See Mattox's criticism concerning this view in Mattox 2003b, 457–458. In the context of Luther's writings from the early 1520s, Wolf's claim, supported by Maron, can be considered inaccurate, at any rate.

31 I Cor. 11.

32 Mattox 2003a, 53–54; Mattox 2003b, 459–462; Luther's later productions, especially the *Lectures on Genesis* 1535–1545 offer a more, although not fully, equal image of a man and a woman in the initial state. See, e.g., Mattox 2003a; Mattox 2003b; Kvam 2004; Stjerna 2004; Bell 2005.

33 Mattox 2003b, 459. Also in Mattox 2003a, 30.

34 See also Cortright 2011, 107–108.

35 Mattox 2003a, 31; Bell 2005, 165.

36 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 22.

37 WA 24, 102b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 141a, 141b. Translation by Susan Karrant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

to God but also to her husband, as she was expected to give him obedience and help.<sup>38</sup> However, Luther's text suggests as well that, per creation, the woman would have had authority of her own body and life up to a point, in spite of the premise of representing otherness.

Even though a woman was to a man as the moon was to the sun, she had been the master of the created world (*ein herr uber alle/domina terrae*) alongside the man.<sup>39</sup> Thus, *per creatum* it would have been possible for women to head households with their husbands, although the highest authority would have still belonged to men in domestic matters.<sup>40</sup> Luther's view of women's share in power on the basis of creation was thus a two-edged sword. On the one hand, he referred to a woman's dominion by calling her a master, making her even a part of the masculine image of power in the printed version of the Sermons, using the expression *ein herr*. It may well have been, though, that originally he used the feminine wording *domina terrae*, as the manuscript would suggest. On the other hand, Luther denied the woman's fundamental sovereign power of decision by emphasizing her subordination and overall dependency on the man, as this chapter suggests.

## CONSTITUTIVE OF WOMANHOOD: WEAKNESS AND STUPIDITY

In his discussions of Genesis, Luther regarded Eve as a simpler representative of humankind than Adam:

Eve was not as reasonable as Adam, as is said above, that God spoke with Adam himself and gave him the order that Eve should learn from him. ... Adam well knew and understood, but she was simpler and too weak for the wily devil, and was not prepared. But Adam was well prepared...<sup>41</sup>

Eve and Adam thus became opposed in Luther's view. Concerning the temptation and fall, Eve did not even understand that she was being seduced by the serpent, unlike Adam, who would have known to be cautious had the situation been reversed. In a sermon in 1524, Luther went so far as to claim:

He [Peter in I Peter 3] described women as weak; the female body is not strong... and the spirit is even weaker. ... A woman is a half-child. Whoever takes a wife, he [should] know that he is a guardian of a child. ... She is a wild animal; you recognize her weakness (*imbecillitatem*).<sup>42</sup>

38 WA 24, 52b–53b, 83b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 127a, 141a. See also Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 15.

39 WA 24, 52b–53b, 83b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 129a: “Eva illo tempore domina fuit terrae ... domina super omnes creaturas...”

40 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 15; Mattox 2003a, 60.

41 WA 24, 83b–84b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 129a–130a, 129b–130b. For the command of God to Adam, and of the female as deceiver, see also WA 14, 122a–123a.

42 WA 15, 420. Sermon on the second Sunday after Epiphany 1524.



The fundamental weakness of the woman, both bodily and mental, led Luther to infer that women were universally weaker and simpler than men, and that the devil's goal was to infect humankind "there where he [the human being] is the worst off, namely, in the feminine person."<sup>43</sup> Luther thus participated in and reconstructed the view of the gender hierarchy that stressed male strength and female weakness.<sup>44</sup> The idea of Eve's weakness—and thus the weakness of all her daughters—represented the traditional exegesis begun by Augustine.<sup>45</sup> This phrasing can also be seen as a continuum of the theological formulations of the female's fault behind the fall. As Dyan Elliott has maintained, already Tertullian (ca. 160–after 220) regarded women, Eve's daughters, as "the devil's gateway."<sup>46</sup> As John Thompson has pointed out, however, there were variations in theologians' views on whether Eve or Adam was more to blame for the fall.<sup>47</sup>

The foregoing could be explained by the view discussed by Karma Lochrie that women were representatives not of the body but rather of the flesh.<sup>48</sup> This offers a valuable rereading of Caroline Walker Bynum, for instance, according to whom "woman" and "body" were commonly regarded as an inseparable pair during the late Middle Ages. According to Bynum, the difference in the sexes was connected to several dichotomies that defined both women and men, and theologians—both men and women—regarded the woman as a representative of physicality.<sup>49</sup> For several female theologians, physicality was often a positive element, enabling them to join with Christ. Instead, male theologians often considered female physicality, on the contrary, to be a threat, as Bynum has claimed.<sup>50</sup> According to Lochrie, the opposition of woman and man as body and spirit does not offer a correct image of medieval views. She highlights instead that the woman was not identified with the physical body but with the idea of the flesh.<sup>51</sup> "This distinction makes a difference

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43 "Auffs erste greiffet er den menschen an, da er am schwechsten ist, nemlich die weibliche person..." WA 24, 84b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 130a, 130b.

44 General remarks on this structure are made in Wunder 2002, 21, 29.

45 Aalto 1991, 86–87; Mattox 2003b, 460, 462; Crowther 2010, 47; Wiberg Pedersen 2010, 192.

46 Elliott 2008, 17; Green 2009, 10.

47 See Thompson 2009, 518–521.

48 Lochrie 1991, 3.

49 Bynum 2012, 151, 171, 175. See also Lochrie 1991, 15. Amy Hollywood has, however, contested this view as a far simplistic one. According to Hollywood, it was indeed often, but not always, male theologians who used femininity and corporality as an inseparable pair in a very practical sense, while females regarded the images of the body also, and sometimes mainly, as allegories of the spiritual relationship with God. Moreover, Hollywood has noted that the genre of the text had a profound significance in the representation of female bodiliness in the texts of both female and male theologians. Hollywood 1995, 27–38.

50 Bynum treats the topic, for instance, in Bynum 2012, 151–179.

51 Lochrie 1991, 3.

in how the Middle Ages might have construed woman not as a passive, corruptible, physical body, but as that principle of disruption in the human psyche, the flesh.”<sup>52</sup>

Mickey Mattox has, for his part, pointed out that in his younger years, Luther tended to “feminize sin or heresy.”<sup>53</sup> Luther thus generalized Eve’s way of being to all women, connecting them with a portrayal of pride and superstition.<sup>54</sup> His tendency to associate sin with women was in Mattox’s opinion based on his interpretation of Eve. The feminization of sin was also a common feature in theological writings before Luther, and thus Luther acceded to the most common traditional insights of male theologians.<sup>55</sup> According to Peter Abelard, for instance, female virtue was to be respected because of the greater weakness of her sex.<sup>56</sup> Luther’s view of women could well in this regard be interpreted as connecting them to the flesh as an abstract image of evil, not to the body or bodiliness as such.

The creation and the fall were historical realities for Luther.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, Luther could make deductions from the first human beings, Adam and Eve, regarding the following generations. The woman was bad off, and vulnerable, in such a way that through her evil entered into humankind. The same deduction is apparent in Luther’s evaluation of women during Peter’s time and during his own: throughout history, the woman could be labeled as a half-child. It is noteworthy, however, that a human being (*ein mensch*) referred in the former passage to both sexes. Female and male were thus regarded as two persons of humanity. This differs from Luther’s perception in the passages discussed above which implicitly made a connection between the human being and man.

Luther’s criticism of women as Eve’s daughters, sharing her flaws, is a straightforward continuum of his view of woman as created merely to meet the need of man, discussed earlier. The otherness that women represented, not least because they were created second and for a very specific purpose, left Luther to conclude about their weakness and stupidity. There was thus a very strong connection between woman’s initial subjection and the fact that she was deceived, not the man, who would have had the wits in a *disputatio* to oppose the devil.

Luther emphasized Eve’s mental weakness along with her inferiority in the *Sermons on Genesis*. First, Eve wanted something she did not have and was not entitled to, namely, cleverness. In this passage of the Sermons, there is a certain difference between the manuscripts and the printed version. In the manuscripts, the desire to be clever

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52 Lochrie 1991, 3–4.

53 Mattox 2003a, 64.

54 Mattox 2003b, 460.

55 Mattox 2003a, 64.

56 Karras 2008a, 63.

57 See, for instance, WA 24, 4b–5b. *Sermons on Genesis*; Lo 2008, 139, fn.76.

is connected to all human beings, regardless of their gender.<sup>58</sup> In the printed version, however, it is connected explicitly to Eve.<sup>59</sup>

One could say that in Luther's view the desire for cleverness may well have been a feature connecting women and men. However, Luther's predecessors and contemporaries held that it was natural for the inferior to try to reach toward perfection<sup>60</sup> (for example, for the female sex to orient toward manly abilities, such as rationality). As probable as it is to suppose that the desire for cleverness was a non-gendered issue for Luther, it is also worth noting that he tended to connect women in particular with this particular desire. This conclusion can be made on the basis of the contemporary idea that the inferior sought the perfect, as well as by taking seriously the difference between the versions of Luther's text. Luther's view of the woman's inferiority, compared to the man, and his affiliation with the traditional interpretation would thus become visible in this context.

Furthermore, in the manuscripts of the *Sermons* Luther described Eve's line of thought in regard to the prohibition against eating from the tree of knowledge: "Here the woman begins to ponder: 'perhaps the word [of the devil] is true; who knows whether it [the prohibition] is the word of God?'"<sup>61</sup> In the printed text, Adam's authority is questioned even more straightforwardly: "So the woman ends up thinking: Adam must not have understood it right."<sup>62</sup> In the manuscript, Eve's doubts concerning Adam's teaching is presented indirectly and thus the gendered point of view is not emphasized, even though it is there.

Luther thereby connected Eve's thoughts to unbelief, which ruled in her after speaking to the devil. Unbelief as such was not a feminine flaw for Luther, as I have presented in Chapter II,<sup>63</sup> nor was it a question of mental abilities. Nonetheless, the results of unbelief were gender-related, and they seem to have indicated woman's inferior abilities for Luther: as she was not as gifted as man, she did not understand her proper place in relation to him. Even though she should have relied on God and Adam, her superiors, she disobediently and unwisely questioned their authority. Thus, Luther connected desire (to be clever) with the fall of woman, though only as a *consequence* of unbelief.

What did the fall of woman, then, determine from the viewpoint of the whole of humanity? Luther continued his analysis:

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58 WA 14, 133a. *Sermons on Genesis*. The woman's inferior cleverness, compared to man's, is explicated in WA 14, 129b.

59 WA 24, 89b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

60 Brown 1986, 12.

61 WA 14, 131b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

62 WA 24, 85b. *Sermons on Genesis*.: "Hic mulier inceptit cogitare 'forte verum est verbum, contra, quis scit, an verbum dei sit?'"

63 See also Mattox 2003b, 461.

If he [Adam] would not have eaten, and would have stayed constant, God could well have created another wife for him. 'Adam (says Paul) was not deceived but rather the woman.' ... She was a fool (*eine nerryn*), easy to lead astray, and did not know any better, but he had God's word before him. He knew it well and should have punished her...<sup>64</sup>

The passage reveals two, very different kinds of approaches to humanity. On the one hand, Eve gained her importance through being a representative of woman-kind; Adam, on the other hand, was an important human being *per se*. Eve could be replaced by another embodiment of her kind, while Adam could not. The fall of Adam, in other words, saved Eve from being disposed of and substituted.

For Luther, the woman's position as instrumental was found in the context of Eve's erroneous search for wisdom. She was replaceable in a way that the man was not. Her determining quality was foolishness, and thus she could be easily led astray, thereby deserving punishment. Was this the nature of all women, according to Luther? On the basis of the analysis thus far, the case seems to be "as with Eve, as with her daughters."

The only woman who was neither physically or mentally under the curse that began with Eve was the Virgin Mary.<sup>65</sup> Luther approved of her honorary title "Mother of God" (*Theotokos*)<sup>66</sup> while rejecting the one "Queen of Heaven" and the like. He nonetheless did use titles, such as "the most blessed Mother of God" (*der hochgebenedeyten mutter gottes*), "pure virgin" (*zuchtigen Junckfrawen*), and "blessed Virgin Mary" (*die hochgelobte iunckfraw* or *beata virgo*) to describe his appreciation of Mary.<sup>67</sup> The basis on which he criticized devotion to Mary was to emphasize devotion to Christ:<sup>68</sup>

...it is right that she is honored correctly. When people are deeply engaged in this honoring, they honor her more than is proper... priests and monks have expanded the honoring of a woman and lifted Mary so high that they have made a goddess (*ein gottin*) (like those of the pagans) out of a modest servant (*demutigen dienerin*).<sup>69</sup>

In Luther's view, a mediator was not needed between a human being and God, as Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen and Lyndal Roper, for instance, have noted.<sup>70</sup> In con-

64 WA 24, 90b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 129a, 133a–134a.

65 WA 10<sup>I</sup>:1, 67. *The Christmas Gospel*. For the history of interpretations of Mary, see Wiberg Pedersen 2005, 26–30.

66 *Theotokos* is Greek and means literally "the one who gives birth to God." See, for instance, Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 60.

67 StA 1, 315–317. *Magnificat*; WA 7, 66. *Freedom of a Christian*. A similar notion is made in Wiberg Pedersen 2005, 30–31.

68 Karant-Nunn 1982, 36–37; Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 33–34; Wiberg Pedersen 2005, 30–31; Ghiselli 2010, 173.

69 WA 10<sup>III</sup>, 313b–314b. Sermon on the birth of Mary. Translation by Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks. Luther also gives the same emphasis, for instance, in WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 407. *Little Prayer Book*.

70 Wiberg Pedersen 2005, 31; Roper 2016, 73. See also p. 58.

temporary reformers' wordings, devotion to Christ was also used as the proper—and only possible—substitute for the veneration of Saint Margaret, the patron saint of pregnancy, or Saint Anne, Mary's mother, for example.<sup>71</sup> The image that Luther wanted his contemporaries to adopt regarding Mary was one of a low-born, poor maiden, who did not recognize her own humbleness. In order to do this, he presented his contemporaries, men and women, as opposites of Mary by referring to their weaknesses and flaws.<sup>72</sup> Mary could also be paralleled to male figures worth imitating, such as Paul's disciple Timotheus or even Christ himself, as Luther did in the *Freedom of a Christian*.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Luther did not treat Mary's example in a gender-specific way, but instead saw her characteristics as worth of identification for both sexes. As such, this was not a new interpretation: even before Luther, Mary had been regarded as an ideal that both women and men should imitate.<sup>74</sup>

As an image of a mother and as representative of her sex, Mary was also differentiated from all other women. For Luther, the difference between Mary and all other mothers was first and foremost a question of physicality, connected to the state of women due to original sin. He discussed this, for instance, in two sermons from 1522 and 1523.<sup>75</sup> As Mary was a sinless virgin when she became a mother and not afflicted by original sin, she did not have to suffer from delivery pains, which applied to other women, nor did she suffer shame or injuries. As Luther put it, Christ did not damage Mary's body in any way during childbirth.<sup>76</sup> The image that Luther offered of Mary to his contemporaries was one to be pursued, as he himself believed. In terms of her characteristics as a subservient human being, the ideal was indeed achievable. However, in relation to her status as a virgin mother without sin, the ideal was only partly unattainable.

Luther explicitly noted the impossibility to be like Mary in his open letter to Leonard Koppe, stating that it was as equally inconceivable to keep one's monastic vow as it was to promise to be the mother of God.<sup>77</sup> Luther's emphasis was certainly on the unnaturalness of the cloister vow: arguably his aim was not to stress any kind of virginal position for a woman. Instead, he separated Mary from other women's bodiliness and way of being by accentuating her bodily and spiritual difference,

71 Karant-Nunn 1982, 28.

72 StA 1, 324–331. *Magnificat*. The English translation in LW uses masculine terms of humankind in several contexts as the counterpart for Mary's humbleness. This does not, however, come from the original text. Compare, for instance, StA 1, 328 and LW 21, 312. Luther also treated Elisabeth as an example of a true Christian for both women and men. See, for instance, WA 12, 608b–617b. Sermon on the Visitation of Mary. See also Wiberg Pedersen 2005, 34–35.

73 WA 7, 66–67. *Freedom of a Christian*.

74 See Wiberg Pedersen 2005, 27.

75 WA 10<sup>1</sup>:1, 58–95. *The Christmas Gospel*; WA 12, 421–426. Sermon on the Purification.

76 WA 10<sup>1</sup>:1, 67. *The Christmas Gospel*; WA 12, 422. Sermon on the Purification.

77 WA 11, 399. To Leonard Koppe.

compared to other women, and by highlighting her mental qualities, which were desirable for any human being.

What is indeed essential is that even though Luther encouraged people to imitate a particularly female ideal in Mary, the features of the ideal—such as humility<sup>78</sup>—lacked any gendered meaning. In that regard, women could not be any closer to the ideal representation of the human being than men. Of course, the genre of the *Magnificat*, for example, as *Fürstenspiegel*<sup>79</sup>—written with a male ruler in mind—affected Luther’s language. However, Luther’s usage of Mary as an agendered example is interesting as it clearly was a part of the male-oriented mode of speaking. Hence, as Eve was a model example of *womankind* at its worst, respectively Mary, despite of being a woman, offered a model example that *humankind* as a whole should imitate.

## WOMAN’S VALUE AS GOD’S CREATION

Even though the woman was for Luther the representative of otherness, even a prototype of weakness and stupidity, he tended to regard that she had a value of her own. He emphasized in at least two different contexts in *On Married Life* that both women and men should be honored, not least because of the fact that their bodies were created by God. As the creation of both female and male was a result of God’s decision, both sexes were undoubtedly valuable.<sup>80</sup> The creation of God was thus not an issue of contempt but rather of respect. Neither of the sexes was entitled to despise one another, but “each should honor the other’s image and body as a divine and good creation...”<sup>81</sup> Luther noted that his contemporaries deemed women as “a necessary evil (*eyn noettigs ubel*),” yet this was not a judgment he was willing to accept.<sup>82</sup> He referred particularly to Genesis 2:18<sup>83</sup> to point out that the woman was called a helper for the man, which indicated that she was pleasing in God’s sight.<sup>84</sup> In the *Exhortation* as well, Luther grounded his statements on the very same passage from Genesis. He noted that it was “against reason and nature to understand that a wife is a helper to her husband...” Faith instead could very well understand it.<sup>85</sup>

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78 For Luther on humility, see, e.g., Wiberg Pedersen 2007. For a short analysis of *Magnificat*, see fn. 1.

79 Wiberg Pedersen 2015, 228.

80 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 293. *On Married Life*.

81 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 276. *On Married Life*.

82 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 293. *On Married Life*. See also Bell 2005, 167; Cortright 2011, 145–146; Wiberg Pedersen 2017, 136.

83 “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’”

84 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 294. *On Married Life*.

85 WA 12, 233–234. *Exhortation*. For the understanding by faith, see also Cortright 2011, 100–101.

The contemporary opinion among humanist scholars in Wittenberg often not only tended to regard women as inferior than men, but also deemed them to be subjects of prejudice and ridicule, as Kristen Kvam has shown.<sup>86</sup> This misogynistic stance had, in Cortright's words, "survived in various quarters of male society."<sup>87</sup> The grounds for this attitude were at least partially historical. Aristotle, whose influence on the Catholic tradition was undeniable, considered that a woman was nothing but an incomplete man in terms of her body.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, Augustine presented that the female was created by God and thus her sex was not a defect.<sup>89</sup> Scholastics widely accepted this premise: for instance, Thomas Aquinas classified the female sex as intended by God, rather than as an accident of nature like Aristotle. However, the academics did not question the inferiority of women in comparison with men, in terms of both intellect and physical structure. For this reason, women were held to be dependent on male guidance in everything, as the vast majority of Scholastics believed.<sup>90</sup> These views were passed on through theoretical treatises, university lectures, and public sermons.<sup>91</sup>

Luther underlined the creation of both sexes as God's conscious decision, much like Augustine and Aquinas, among others, had done. In this respect, Luther's view can indeed be seen as influenced by Augustinianism rather than by Aristotelianism, for instance.<sup>92</sup> His emphasis on the metaphor of sun and moon, discussed previously, is closely related to this theme in my view. By stressing that the bodily nature of the human being was immutable, he rejected the idea that men were the most desired designs of godly creation. Despite their different functions, both female and male bodies were equally significant.<sup>93</sup> This interpretation is, from my perspective, supported by Heide Wunder's analysis on the metaphor of sun and moon: that the image was not only about hierarchy but also about a relationship between two different but complementary beings.

However, even though Luther may have not approved of ridiculing women, he was tied to traditional insights of the gender hierarchy, wherein male represented the normative and female was fundamentally connected with otherness, as my discussion in the former sections have shown. In this way, Luther's position was actually quite close to the views of the Scholastics, even though his motives to discuss

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86 See Kvam 1992, 7–8; Kvam 2004, 8–9.

87 Cortright 2011, 145.

88 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 30.

89 Mattox 2003a, 41. See also Gerle 2015, 104–105.

90 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 52; 2011, 22, 144; Cortright 2011, 43–44.

91 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 22.

92 See also Cortright 2011, 93 for this question. According to Gerle, these authors and, for instance, Meister Eckhart (c. 1260–c. 1327/8) as well thus held the idea of both the woman and the man as God's images. Gerle 2015, 126.

93 See also Mattox 2003a, 52.

the gender system were colored with the emphasis of favoring matrimony. Consequently, the former notions do not lead to a conclusion of “equality yet difference” of the sexes, which Kirsi Stjerna has presented on the basis of Luther’s *Lectures on Genesis*, which in 1535–1545 naturally had a profoundly different context.<sup>94</sup> Rather, as Elisabeth Gerle among others has remarked, Luther’s idea of the equality of human beings before God did not exclude a view of hierarchical relations in this life.<sup>95</sup>

The question of gender hierarchy, on the one hand, and the value of women, on the other, is closely connected to Luther’s opinion concerning *imago Dei*. In modern research, there have been several discussions regarding Luther’s view regarding the image of God, and many scholars have come to the conclusion that it included both sexes, although not to the same degree. This conclusion is mostly a result of examining Luther’s later *Lectures on Genesis*.<sup>96</sup>

Luther’s usage of words in the texts examined in this section raises the question of whether the woman was created in *imago Dei* or merely in *imago viri*. In Luther’s treatises, the emphasis seems to be on the likeness of God concerning both sexes, as indicated by the passages defending God’s specific decision to create a woman. The *Sermons*, however, suggest that the creation of woman was first and foremost understood by Luther to have been in the likeness of man. The discussions concerning man as the primary representative of humanity—including the metaphor of sun and moon, for instance—support this view. In particular, the notion that before the creation of woman, the man “alone was an image of a man (*ein mans bilde*)” leads one to ask whether a woman was created to be merely the second image of a man. Nevertheless, Luther’s choice again of the verbs *machen* and *schaffen* when describing the creation of both woman and man could imply some sort of equality between them.

The duality in Luther’s thoughts concerning the image of God can be traced back to his primary source, the Bible, and to Christian tradition. Even though in Genesis man and woman were created in the image of God, the New Testament also contains Paul’s insistence that only the man is *imago Dei*.<sup>97</sup> Already Augustine had held that the gender hierarchy did not apply to the spiritual but only to the physical: not to salvation but only to this life and the social order.<sup>98</sup> Of Luther’s contemporaries, John Calvin believed the same. According to John L. Thompson, Calvin understood woman to be fully an image of God in terms of salvation, but in terms of the hierarchical gender system of this world, she was God’s image only to

94 Stjerna 2004, 35.

95 Gerle 2015, 136.

96 See, for instance, Kvam 2004; Bell 2005; Lo 2008.

97 Compare I Cor. 11:7: “A man should not cover his own head, because he exists as God’s image and glory. But the woman is man’s glory.”

98 Mattox 2003a, 34; Parsons 2011, 81.



a secondary degree.<sup>99</sup> It is probable that Luther also considered both of the sexes as images of God in relation to salvation, while in terms of the present life and gender hierarchy the image of God was not mutually shared between men and women.

Luther's discussion in *On Monastic Vows* supports this view. In that treatise, he noted,

It is not a virgin or a chaste which will be saved, but a Christian. Moreover, in Christ there is no male or female, no virgin or wife, or similar [kind of distinctions], but one faith, one baptism, one Lord.<sup>100</sup>

Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen seems to favor the interpretation that this passage refers to gender equality in terms of present social relations in Luther's thinking.<sup>101</sup> Several lay reformers, men but especially women, came to use the same reference to Galatians as Luther, in addition to Joel 2:28,<sup>102</sup> to validate their right to act publicly in defending their beliefs.<sup>103</sup> In other words, it was used by them in their claims of social and gender equality. Luther did not have to justify his actions, since his public agency was given due to his gender and social position. Instead, he used the foregoing passage to argue that in the eyes of God, monks and nuns did not have any special standing in comparison to all other people.

While in some contexts Luther indeed defended women's right to use their voice, it only applied when men were not capable of using theirs. In *On the Misuse of the Mass* in 1521, he noted not only that women should preach if men could not, but he also presented biblical women such as Miriam,<sup>104</sup> Deborah,<sup>105</sup> and Huldah<sup>106</sup> as model examples.<sup>107</sup> In 1523, Luther noted in a sermon that one could find both women and men who could preach as well as the official preachers did.<sup>108</sup> As he further maintained, however, women were not to speak in public or to hold pastoral positions since "such order God allows to stay in force..."<sup>109</sup> In other words, even though Luther did not permit women to preach *ex officio* he credited them with the ability to interpret the Bible and also to preach when necessary, although only in the private sphere.<sup>110</sup>

99 Thompson 1988; Parsons 2011, 302.

100 WA 8, 652. *On Monastic Vows*. Compare Gal. 3:28: "A person is no longer a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a male or a female, because all of you are one in Christ Jesus."

101 Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 237.

102 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

103 Räisänen-Schröder 2013, 93. For the rhetoric on lay women, see, e.g., KSZ 1999 (1524), 23, 46.

104 See Exodus 15:20.

105 See Judges 4:4.

106 See II Kings 22:14.

107 WA 8, 498. *On the Misuse of the Mass* 1521.

108 WA 12, 389. Sermon on Saint Peter's epistle 1523.

109 WA 12, 309.

110 Noted also in Methuen 2013, 91.

Even though the passage quoted can be read as suggesting that Luther excluded the idea of gender hierarchy, it is nonetheless best explained with the tension between this life, on the one hand, and in terms of salvation, on the other. As regards salvation, there may have been no woman or man in Luther's view, but regarding life in the flesh there certainly seemed to be a hierarchy between women and men. Luther's thinking on women's preaching supports this view as well.

The proper gendered way of being in this life—or “a gender destiny,” as Pilgrim Lo has described it<sup>111</sup>—was to respect the hierarchy between women and men without making any attempts to go beyond one's gender, as the metaphor of sun and moon aptly demonstrates. Neither women nor men were permitted to desire to be anything else than as they were created. This applied to their bodies, which could not be altered, but I believe that with the sun and moon metaphor Luther alluded especially to a gendered way of being which needed to be in accord with a certain kind of body. In Luther's view, both sexes were to be respected on the basis of creation, as long as the gender hierarchy was not disturbed.

Luther's emphasis on the unchangeable nature of a certain sex contained quite a profound social-political statement, which was related to his criticism of virginal life, as, for instance, the aforementioned passage from *On Monastic Vows* shows. Throughout the Middle Ages, virginity had been considered as a means of transcending the boundaries that one's gender created. As Meri Heinonen has mentioned in her study on male and female mystics in later medieval Germany, female virgins could gain a certain number of masculine characteristics, both in the intellect and in the body. Bodily or spiritual virginity was thus a factor that could break gender limits for women.<sup>112</sup>

However, the approval of the representatives of the Church concerning the gender reversal of women was not a given, and often quite the opposite.<sup>113</sup> For Luther, every attempt to surpass the body by one's way of being was against creation, since “we are exactly as he created us.” For Luther, the human body was the decisive element in being a woman or a man; that is, the body was the aspect by means of which one was defined as female or male. Hence, the body was also the setting in which one's gender was constructed. According to Luther's view, no exceptions existed, at least in theory.

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111 Lo 2008, 139.

112 Heinonen 2007, 71–74. For virginity, see, e.g., Shaw 1998; *Medieval Virginities* 2003; Schulenburg 2001. For the men's part, there were also certain ways to reverse one's sex, as it were. Especially mystical texts could describe men as women in their relation to God. As Caroline Walker Bynum has noted, men's usage of female terms for themselves or each other was used as a symbolic reversal connected to the loss of masculine power and status. See Bynum 1987, 284; 2012, 165–166. Nonetheless, Luther's point was more on the bodily dimension of defining gender.

113 Schulenburg 2001, 2, 163–166.

Several scholars have connected Luther's statements concerning the value of women to the *querelle des femmes* of the late Middle Ages.<sup>114</sup> This phenomenon was explicated in the texts of medieval writers, both men and women, who debated the value of women in various discourses. The *querelle* was most characterized by the polemical writings of upper-class, educated women, who usually reacted to specific publications of male authors with writing that was aimed at the common understanding of women as inferior beings. The women writers' purpose was to emphasize women as at least equal, but usually superior to men. Christine de Pizan (c. 1364–1430) is often regarded as one of the first representatives of *querelle* and a model example of the movement. Modern scholarship finds various reasons for the emergence of the debate, including historical reasons such as misogynous attitudes, secularization, and demographical changes. Nonetheless, as Friederike Hassauer has appositely noted, the overall question was that of authority to define the sexes, especially woman.<sup>115</sup>

It is probable that Luther was familiar with the discussion of the value of women. Arguably, from Luther's own viewpoint, his discussion was primarily based on his reading of Genesis and his reactions to the more recent debate *On Monastic Vows* in the first place. Luther's emphasis on the value of the sexes per creation, but also his statements concerning the proper place of woman, is thus best understood through his criticisms of the cloister and virginity. However, it is logical to interpret his statements as part of *querelle*, as Kristen Kvam and Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen, for instance, have done. Even though Luther himself would probably not have made that connection, from the point of view of historical research he is one of the writers who did contribute to the *querelle des femmes*.

One of the primary aims of Luther's aforementioned texts, especially *On Married Life* and the *Exhortation*, was to convince both lay and clerical audiences to assume marriage as the proper way of life. This motive obviously influenced the need both to stress the goodness of the creation of women and to emphasize the corporal background of the woman's proper mode of being. The notion of the unalterable bodiliness of both the sexes thereby was also a means to stress the gender roles derived from bodiliness. Understood in this way, Luther's focus was not on the value of the woman, but on the way one's gender should be constructed to meet the new social demands, partially being constructed by Luther himself, which stressed matrimony as the proper choice.

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114 See, for instance, Kvam 2004, 8; Wiberg Pedersen 2010, 191; Cortright 2011, 108. Kvam's dissertation actually begins with the premise of Luther's joining in the *querelle de femmes*. See Kvam 1992.

115 Kelly 1984, 65–67; Hassauer 2008, 12–16; Martínez 2008, 120–129. See also Schnell 1998, 294–309.

## 2. MISSION LARGER THAN LIFE: MOTHERHOOD

In his May 1521 letter to John Agricola (1492?–1566),<sup>116</sup> Luther sent his greetings to Agricola's wife, who recently had become a mother. Luther and Agricola were friends and coworkers: Agricola had moved to Wittenberg already in 1515 and became acquainted with Luther quite soon thereafter.<sup>117</sup> He had followed Luther, for instance, to Leipzig, where Luther and Andreas Karlstadt had a disputation with John Eck (1486–1543).<sup>118</sup>

Agricola and Elisabeth (Else), née Moshauer (?–1554), had celebrated their wedding on September 10, 1520.<sup>119</sup> At the time of Luther's letter to John, the Agricola couple lived in Wittenberg.<sup>120</sup> Luther himself was at Wartburg Castle, where he had recently been transported after the Diet of Worms. After mainly discussing his own situation and referring to the circumstances in Wittenberg, Luther sent his farewell to “your flesh and rib (*carnem tuam et costam tuam*)”<sup>121</sup> also noting that God had granted that “the burden” had “happily left the womb” of the mother (*Dominus det, ut uteri onus feliciter exponat*).<sup>122</sup>

In the *post scriptum* of the letter, Luther added that he was sending two gulden<sup>123</sup> with the letter, one to the newborn and the other to the mother. The mother's gulden should be used, he said, to buy her wine in order to support the production of milk in her body (*ut vinum bibat, et lacte abundet*).<sup>124</sup> It was commonly believed that wine should be an integral part of women's diet both before and after giving birth, since it purified the blood.<sup>125</sup> As the letter in question is the first one from Luther to John that has been preserved in WA, we cannot judge whether Luther referred to the pregnancy otherwise during the term. Yet this particular letter does suggest anyhow that Luther had knowledge of the practicalities of delivery and lying-in, as well as the functions of the mother's body, as the notion of buying wine proves.

What, then, was Luther's position toward motherhood and mother's bodies in general? On what did he base his discussion on women as mothers? In the previous chapter, my analysis showed that women were considered by Luther as valuable yet entirely secondary human beings. Their subjection to men was a given for him. In this chapter, I focus on analyzing how he discussed and justified his

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116 WA BR 2, no. 409, 335–336. To Johann Agricola (May 12, 1521). This is the first preserved letter in WA from Luther to Agricola.

117 Leder 1983, 421.

118 Kawerau 1977, 19–20.

119 Kawerau 1977, 27, 329.

120 Kawerau 1977, 31.

121 WA BR 2, no. 409, 335, 7.

122 WA BR 2, no. 409, 335, 7–8.

123 A gold coin used in the Holy Roman Empire. To compare in modern currency, two gulden were worth the same as over a hundred euros in 2016.

124 WA BR 2, no. 409, 336, 19–21.

125 Rublack 1996, 89.

claim that the only suitable role for women was to be a mother. In analyzing his rhetoric, the most weight is put on the text of *On Married Life* and *Sermons on Genesis*, since they offer the most information on the subject. Other sources are used as supplementary evidence.

## THE NORM OF LABORING WOMAN

When He [God] cursed Eve, He did not take her female body or her female sex organs (*den weyblichen leyb noch weybische gelidmas*); He did not take back the blessing that He had spoken to her that she would be fruitful, but He reinforced this and said: "I will give you much trouble when you become pregnant." This misery was not just promised to one or two women, but to all of them. The words sound as if God knew that all women would become pregnant...<sup>126</sup>

This quotation reveals Luther's overall stand on the most important component of the female way of being: the female body and mothering, as well as the intimate relationship between them. The passage further supports the remark made already in Chapter II: in Luther's rhetoric, the fall did not reduce the need to live according to one's body but rather it strengthened the significance of bodiliness.

How exactly a woman should live her life through her body is found in Luther's guidance:

The man must comfort and strengthen the wife in labor, not with Saint Margaret's legends and other, silly women's works, but by saying: Think, dear Greta that you are a woman and that this work of God has come to you. Trust yourself joyfully to His [God's] will and let Him have His way with you. Do everything in your power to bring forth this child; if you die in so doing, then you die in a noble deed and obedience to God. If you were not a woman, then you would wish to be one because of this work alone that you might thus gloriously suffer and die in God's work and [due to His] will. For here is the word of God, which created you and implanted such a hardship in you. Tell me; is that not also (as Salomon says) obtaining favor from God also in the middle of such a hardship?<sup>127</sup>

Luther's later sermon *Marital Estate* from January 1525 contains the exact same words concerning labor, women's legends, and the husband's comforting.<sup>128</sup> Hen-

126 WA 11, 398. To Leonard Koppe. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

127 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 296. *On Married Life*.

128 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 25. *Marital Estate*. Compare: "Also solt man auch ein Weib troesten unnd stercken in kindes noeten, nit wie im Bapstumb geschehen, mit S. Margareten legende und andern nerrischen Weiberwercken umbgehen, sonder also solt man zu jr sagen: liebe fraw, gedencket, das jr ein Weib seit und diß werck Gott an euch gefellet, troestet euch seines willens froelich und last jm sein recht an euch, gebt das kind her und thut darzu mit aller macht, sterbet jr darueber, so farth hin in Gottes namen, wol euch, denn jr sterbet eigentlich im edlen werck und gehorsam Gottes. Ja menn du, liebe fraw, nicht ein Weib werest, so soltestu jetzt allein umb dieses wercks willen wuentschen, das du ein Weib werest unnd so koestlich in Gottes werck und willen noth leiden und sterben, denn hie ist Gottes wort, das dich also geschaffen, solche noth in dir gepflantzet hat."

ce, Luther discussed lived bodiliness in both *On Married Life* and *Marital Estate* through a fictional situation where a pregnant woman was in labor. The husband should, according to Luther, comfort her in her sufferings by reminding her of her proper duty; childbearing and labor were the primary things God had created her for. Luther continued this rhetorical path by concluding:

If they [mothers] become tired and eventually die, it does not matter, let them lose their lives. That is the purpose of their existence. It is better to live a brief life in good health than a long life in ill health.<sup>129</sup>

In the *Sermons on Genesis* he exhorted: "...bear the pains of giving birth (perfer dolores in partu)—whatever will befall."<sup>130</sup> Childbirth was actually, as Luther put it by following Paul's words,<sup>131</sup> an act through which women could be saved. He specified this claim by noting that it was not enough to bring forth children—as otherwise non-Christian women would have deserved salvation as well. One had to be a Christian and bear children in Christian faith.<sup>132</sup> Thus, as Risto Saarinen has remarked, "Only when the act of childbearing and the education of the next generation are embedded in the transmission of faith and love can they have salvific meanings..."<sup>133</sup> It is possible that with these remarks Luther's aim was to oppose a commonly held contemporary view that a laboring woman "was under the sway of the devil,"<sup>134</sup> although his aim was arguably also to stress the biblical understanding of mothering. In bodily terms, a woman was meant to truly live her belief through her body, according to Luther.

Holding on to the tradition of the need to bring to church a mother after childbirth, Luther reminded that when needing purification, a mother should always remember that she was "Adam's daughter who wanders in the flesh (*im fleysch wandelt*)."<sup>135</sup> She was sinful, as the concept of the flesh reveals, largely due to original sin, as the notion of "Adam's daughter" shows. However, as the readings explained already in Chapter II have proved, in Luther's opinion motherhood was a calling given to women by God himself despite the corruption that human sinfulness caused.

Another viewpoint emerges from these statements as well, namely, the ideal of motherly self-sacrifice. Motherly love had been held by various medieval theo-

129 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 301. *On Married Life*.

130 WA 14, 142a. *Sermons on Genesis*.

131 1. Tim. 2:15: "However, women [lit. she] will be saved by having children, if they continue to have faith, love, and holiness, along with good judgment [or modesty]."

132 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 25–26. *Marital Estate*.

133 Saarinen 2008, 59. Saarinen has made the conclusion on the basis of Luther's discussion of I Timothy 2:15 in 1528, but the notion holds true in the beginning of the decade as well.

134 Accordingly, as was believed, she could not be laid to rest in the churchyard should she die before going to church. Roper 2016, 282. See also Roper 1997, 209–210 for a short discussion of the lying-in time in relation to evil.

135 WA 12, 423. Sermon on the Purification of the Virgin.

logians as one of the purest and deepest forms of love, as Brian Patrick McGuire has pointed out by means of several examples.<sup>136</sup> However, the emphasis on motherhood varied across time and historical context: spiritual, virginal motherhood was stressed especially before the twelfth century by monastic-oriented sources. The increasing deference toward marital life, starting in the twelfth century, downplayed virginal motherhood in favor of emphasis on the sufferings and, indeed, the humanity of motherhood.<sup>137</sup> In Luther's thought, the meaning of suffering was emphasized as a whole: he encouraged his fellow Christians to regard suffering as God's gift, as Ronald Rittgers has noted.<sup>138</sup>

During the later Middle Ages, the desire to be a mother was held as normative, especially for young laywomen—a perspective that can be regarded as grounded in norms based on the female body in medieval discourse. Medieval books written for women on conduct, for instance, described being a wife and motherhood as natural roles for the female sex. Especially the Virgin Mary was a role model for women when (men were) validating this view. Therefore, even before the reforms of the evangelical movements in the sixteenth century, most women got married and had children,<sup>139</sup> which, generally speaking, were the two most important events in a woman's life.<sup>140</sup> Overall, both evangelical women and men seem to have regarded childbearing and motherhood as components of “what women's life was ‘really’ like,” as Ulinka Rublack has proved.<sup>141</sup> The welfare of the child was prioritized to an increasing extent, however, and thus self-sacrifice of the mother became a more and more important factor in discussing motherhood.<sup>142</sup> This is mirrored also in Luther's remarks, quoted above.

I think Rublack is on target with her notion that to refuse going through the pain of delivery, and the threat of death closely connected to it, actually threatened the contemporary view of the proper way of being a woman.<sup>143</sup> As Luther put it, giving birth to new life was for a woman the purpose of her existence, which he justified by comparing it to noble martyrdom: the highest obedience to God and the proper calling of a Christian woman. Lived bodiliness in the sense of becoming a mother meant the glorification of a woman but, conversely, also the irrelevancy of her life or death, as it were. Hence, wearing herself out was natural and approvable for a woman in the duties of labor and nurturing.

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136 McGuire 2011, 88–94. McGuire has remarked, however, that the importance of the mother bond is also missing in many hagiographies of medieval clerics. See McGuire 2011, 94–95.

137 Atkinson 1991, 239–241.

138 Rittgers 2012, 121.

139 Sheingorn 1996, 89; Davis 2007, 68–69.

140 Karant-Nunn 1982, 26.

141 Rublack 1996, esp. 87.

142 Ibid., 90. Rublack has in fact taken Luther as one of her examples of this.

143 Ibid., 92.

Dying in labor was a real risk that mothers faced in the sixteenth century. Not only delivery itself but the whole of pregnancy was an unpredictable process, fraught with danger: the capability to produce new life went hand in hand with possible death.<sup>144</sup> Luther's rhetoric concerning the readiness to happily accept death seems harsh—given that his aim was to encourage people to enter marriage, especially in *On Married Life*. His words nevertheless become understandable when the actual risks of childbearing and delivery are taken into account. Namely, regardless of how frequent deaths during childbirth were de facto, the threat of dying was present in every labor. Luther thus had to put his words in a way such that he took the experiences of real life seriously as well. In his point of view, the image of a woman in labor as a Christian martyr was suitable. It stressed the vitality of the right kind of faith in everyday life and the particular mission of the woman. At the same time, it underlined the laboring mother's state as one under the guidance of God, not the devil.

In fact, Luther even implied that he had very personal knowledge of the seriousness of the suffering of mothers after giving birth. He did this in his letter to Georg Spalatin (1484–1545) in September 1521,<sup>145</sup> which was written after residing about three months at Wartburg Castle. Georg Spalatin was one of Luther's closest associates, especially during his stay there. Spalatin was the link between Luther and Frederick the Wise, as well as the person to whom Luther sent his writings from Wartburg Castle to pass on for printing.<sup>146</sup> Luther apparently suffered from uroliths while staying at the castle. After one particularly painful experience, he wrote to Spalatin: "Now I am hurting just like a woman in labor: [I am] mangled, wounded, and pleading (*nunc sedeo dolens sicut puerpera lacer et saucius et cruentus*)."<sup>147</sup> As the woman martyrs of his day experienced the suffering of their bodies, so did Luther himself.

Atkinson has maintained that in the sixteenth century, "motherhood became a necessary component of a woman's virtue and an essential element in the good order and prosperity of the household..."<sup>148</sup> Ruth Mazo Karras, for her part, has described the Late Middle Ages in particular as a period when motherhood

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144 Ibid., 109. Rublack has noted in the very same text in a somewhat contradictory sense that deaths in the childbed were actually rather scarce in Germany until the eighteenth century. She has regarded that protection and care offered by families and whole communities, as well as long lying-in times, were the key reasons for this phenomenon. See Rublack 1996, 97. These two rather opposing views of hers are perhaps explained by two different viewpoints: dying in the childbed was a real risk, compared, for instance, to the risks of today, but compared to other regions of that time these deaths were scarcer in Germany.

145 WA BR 2, no. 429, 387–389. To Georg Spalatin (September 9, 1521).

146 Roper 2010, 291–292.

147 WA BR 2, no. 429, 388, 29–30.

148 Atkinson 1991, 242.



began to be represented as the content of womanhood—rhetoric that continued to be embodied in the sixteenth century's evangelical polemics.<sup>149</sup> On the basis of the passages quoted above, it is possible to say that for Luther, motherhood was not only a component of female virtue but also an element that defined the woman's life as a whole. It was more than a virtue: it was an essential part of female bodiliness and her way of being. For Luther, the idea of childbirth as giving significance to a woman's life and consummating it was so noteworthy that it glorified womanhood as a whole. As long as a woman was producing offspring, she was fulfilling her reproductive duty, which was God's order. Therefore, even a mother's death was not an issue as such.

One must ask, however, whether Luther had even an implicit idea of the significance of women mainly as productive units of the society. Luther's disinterest seems to have concerned women as individuals, while the glorification of motherhood focused on womanhood as a whole. This supports the idea of a woman as a productive unit, in which case not the individual woman but the host of women, with any one of them performing the duty required, was of importance. In other words, the importance lay not in the person but in the performance. This view comes close to the one presented in the context of Luther's emphasis on the stubborn wife. As wifehood as such was a more significant question for Luther than were individual wives, so also was motherhood more primary than individual mothers.

My analysis thus suggests quite a different conclusion than the one Cortright has made in his dissertation. He criticizes the viewpoint that in Luther's thought the female body was merely a tool for the man in reproduction, and he suggests that love between the spouses and obedience toward God's order should be taken into account.<sup>150</sup> I think the question of love did have an effect on Luther's language, but regarding what was just discussed it is reasonable to argue that it affected him more clearly during later periods. Especially Chapters V and VI of this study will shed light on that question. In addition, ideas of love or obedience to God do not obviate the somewhat instrumental role that Luther accorded women in the contexts discussed above.

The way Luther deciphered man's role in relation to labor mirrors somewhat the discussion above. In addition to the reality of motherhood that Luther had to integrate into his rhetoric, his patriarchal premise is also in clear view. In the first passage quoted in this section, he noted that it was the man's duty to comfort the woman in the midst of her suffering, and, conversely, the woman should listen to the comforting words of her husband instead of old wives' tales. As an example

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149      Karras 1999, 170.

150      Cortright 2011, 173–174.

of women's tales, Luther took the legend of Saint Margaret, who was considered a patron saint of pregnancy.

The same tendency to disapprove of the saint's role in labor can be found also, for instance, in a sermon of Luther's contemporary Caspar Gutell.<sup>151</sup> In the writings of late medieval thinkers, it was rather common to dismiss the significance of motherhood or to connect the discussion with the burdens of being a husband and fatherhood for a man.<sup>152</sup> Luther's presentation of the role of the husband next to his wife in labor also directs the attention to the male viewpoint, quite similar to his discussions about the creation of women, for instance. Stressing the man's role in delivery turned the woman, her experience, and the nexus of women into otherness. In this way, Luther regarded the mutual relationship between women as secondary compared to male-female relations, as he dismissed not only the role of contemporary women but also the role of retelling the legends of female patron saints, which likely strengthened and supported the relations of women.

Another passage where it is possible to detect male normativity on the basis of Luther's discussion of motherhood can be found in *On Married Life*. When describing the burdens of married life, Luther found familial tasks to be insignificant and lowly for a man, but he stressed nonetheless that "they please God who has ordained them and thus cares for us like a kind and loving mother."<sup>153</sup>

The portrayal of God as maternal was not unprecedented, for several theologians, both women and men, had used similar expressions before and during Luther's time. Prudence Allen has highlighted several medieval women—for example, Mechthild of Hackeborn (c. 1240–c. 1298), Julian of Norwich (1342–c. 1420), and Catherine of Siena (1347–1380)—who used familial, especially maternal, analogies of God's solicitude in their texts.<sup>154</sup> However, maternal analogies were most commonly used for Jesus, whereas God was primarily seen as the Father. According to Sheingorn, "God the Father's nurturing and caring behavior" came up in the medieval context through his relationship with Mary, his Son's mother.<sup>155</sup>

Luther did not discuss God's nurturing in relation to Mary, since he had the tendency to downplay her role, as has been discussed, but by comparing it to temporal motherhood. He thus compared God's care for his children to the care provided by contemporary mothers. By comparing God's and woman's mother-

151 Karant-Nunn 1982, 28.

152 Bynum 2012, 151.

153 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 298. *On Married Life*.

154 Allen 2002, 333–334, 380, 389, 398.

155 Sheingorn 1996, 78, 81. Sheingorn has pointed out that Jesus could also be identified with Sofia (Wisdom), who was considered as God's female manifestation. Among others, Meister Eckhart had used the kind of imagery. See Sheingorn 1996, 78–79. Hale has interestingly presented mothering as a quality connected increasingly to Joseph in the early fifteenth century's ecclesiastical transformation of the cult of St. Joseph. See Hale 1996, 101–116.

hood as like with like, Luther apparently wanted to present an ideal of motherly love toward her children and also legitimize the role of a mother as the most praiseworthy action for a woman. If God himself expressed motherly love, how could a woman refuse to fulfill her duty as a caretaker of offspring? The comparison thus served as a justification for Luther's insights into women's appropriate role.

Elisabeth Gerle has also noted that Luther used maternal analogies of God, and she maintains that in this way Luther tied God and His love to the world to come and its body-related phenomena.<sup>156</sup> The interpretation is accurate from my point of view. I would like to add, however, that Luther's emphasis on men at the expense of women seems to have played a role in seeing God as mother. Similar to his discussion on the father's role in labor as being more important than a women's network, with this imagery he stressed the role of God as nurturer at the expense of Mary's—traditionally significant—role.

Luther's validation of motherhood as the proper path for a Christian woman was related on the whole to his rhetoric of the primacy of marriage compared to celibacy and cloistered life. Luther discussed the proper way of life for women in the following manner in his treatise *Against the Spiritual Estate* in 1522:

Now see part of the misery. The greater part of the girls (*dyrnen*) in the convents are fresh and healthy, created by God to be married wives and carry children, and are not able to stay in that estate willingly.<sup>157</sup>

There can be found hardly any other passages in the text in question that address women in such depth—most of the references to women appear in contexts where Luther treated, for example, the proper male way of life, which included a wife and a family.<sup>158</sup> Most of the references to women thus treated them specifically as wives and mothers.

Indeed, an attempt to use the female body for other missions than motherhood, such as virginity, was a woman's undertaking to "make herself to be better than God has made her (*besser machen denn ers gemacht hatt*)," as Luther put it in his open letter to Leonard Koppe.<sup>159</sup> Instead of pursuing the impossible, "a woman should remain a woman, and bear children, for God has created her for that (*soll ein weybs bild ein weybs bleyben, frucht tragen, datzu es gott geschaffen hat*)."<sup>160</sup> Pursuing things that did not correlate with female corporality, like virginity, signified that one did not actually remain a woman at all.

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156 Gerle 2015, 149.

157 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 156. *Against the Spiritual Estate*.

158 See, e.g., WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 112, 130, 139, and *passim*. *Against the Spiritual Estate*.

159 WA 11, 398. To Leonard Koppe. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

160 WA 11, 398. To Leonard Koppe. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

An example of Luther's polemics against cloister vows is nevertheless his juxtaposition between a nun or monk and a mother in *On Married Life*. He stressed:

Therefore I say that all the nuns and monks, who lack faith and trust in their own chastity and in their order, are not worthy to rock a baptized baby or prepare its pap, even if it was a child of a whore (*hurkind*). Reason: their order and life does not have God's word on its side. Neither can they boast that what they do has come to them from God, as a woman can do, even if she carried an illegitimate child (*eyn unehlich kind*).<sup>161</sup>

A mother with faith was the ideal of a woman for Luther since there were, as he noted, mothers and fathers who lived in unbelief and thus were not any better than their contemporaries in cloisters.<sup>162</sup>

Hence, there could be no comparison between a nun living in unbelief and a mother living in faith, as Luther put it. He seems to have presupposed that nuns did not usually have faith but were cloistered for other reasons—this emphasis was, of course, largely due to his motive to downplay the cloistered way of life. In this context, Luther's validation was based not only on female bodiliness and God's order, but also on one's faith. It was important that both one's body and spirit were on the right track to fulfill God's order and divine will.

Luther's example is striking, however, since at the same time he argued that children born out of fornication and their mothers, the fornicators, were more worthy than nuns and monks. As Rublack has pointed out, unmarried parents were in fact treated with decency in the societies of the sixteenth century, since childbearing and mothering were considered so valuable and indeed honorable tasks—even though the woman herself would have been perceived as dishonorable.<sup>163</sup> In the case of Luther, I consider the juxtaposition to be mainly a matter of rhetoric. In this context, the priority to underline the significance of motherhood overruled the liability of coming to be understood as a defender of fornication.

The theme of mothering versus virginity can be regarded as interconnecting Luther's view of gender hierarchy as well. Merry Wiesner-Hanks has maintained that sexual relationships are always power relationships. This argument closely relates to Michel Foucault's views on sexuality and power.<sup>164</sup> Remaining a woman in the sense of being a wife and a mother was, in essence, tied to the idea of a husband's guardianship and power-over—even though Luther did not quite explicate it. Thus, his criticism of female virginity and his emphasis on motherhood can be

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161 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 297. *On Married Life*.

162 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 298. *On Married Life*.

163 Rublack 1996, 89–90.

164 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 10. Wiesner-Hanks refers to Foucault's discussion in the *History of Sexuality* (1976). For a discussion of theoretization of sexuality as regards Early Modern Germany, as well as an overview of the related research made until 2002, see Wiesner 2002.

seen as supporting the gender hierarchy as well as male authority. In this sense he turned the eyes, yet again, to the male point of view, even if implicitly.

Living in the historical context of fierce evangelical polemics against virginal life, Luther for his part participated in the normative discussion through his examination on motherhood. He justified—and even glorified—motherhood in various ways, although he did it very theoretically. Luther’s detached attitude, which probably arose due to his position in life as a man and especially as a monk, is clearly revealed in his insights of motherhood. By and large, his male perspective and his tendency to mainly take the male point of view into account penetrated several of his discussions, as Susan Karant-Nunn and my analyses thus far have shown.<sup>165</sup> All in all, his justifications derived from a soteriological perspective: the proper way of being for women was rooted in God’s order and thus in female bodiliness, which had to be used correctly and in the right faith.

## **FEMALE FERTILITY: THE LINK BETWEEN BODY AND PROPER WAY OF BEING**

By 1530, under the guidance of Philipp Melanchthon, the University of Wittenberg was becoming a center of novel considerations and scholarship concerning human anatomy; he made the Flemish anatomist and physician Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564) especially known at the university.<sup>166</sup> Vesalius presented an innovative approach to the human body in the sense of favoring empirical evidence over canonized texts and theories of thinkers from Antiquity, such as Galen.<sup>167</sup>

Luther’s contemporaries’ views of the body and its functions were, however, primarily rooted in Greco-Roman medical theories. Sexual desire, illness, and fertility among others were thought to be dependent on bodily humors and qualities. The four main humors of the human body were considered to be blood, black bile, yellow bile, and phlegm, while the four qualities were warm, cold, dry, and moist. According to the ancient principle, the male body was believed to be hotter than the female body, hot being a more positive quality than cold. The instability of humors and qualities could lead to various disorders.<sup>168</sup>

As for sexual desire and reproduction, there were two main theories about the roles of male and female semen in the sixteenth century. According to Hippocratic or Galenic understanding, which has been called “two-seed theory,” both

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165 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 7.

166 Cortright 2011, 108, fn.55.

167 The prohibition to make dissections had resulted in physicians taking texts and theories as a given. For a modern biography of Vesalius, see, e.g., Delavault 1999.

168 MacLehose 1996, 4–5; Shaw 1998, 53–54, 65–66, 71–72; Presti 2014, 930; Cortright 2011, 109, 205; Kambaskovic 2017, 39–40.

female and male bodies were supposed to produce semen as an end product of the combination of blood and spirit. According to this view, the semen of both sexes was needed for successful conception. Therefore, the woman's orgasm was considered as necessary as that of the man.<sup>169</sup>

The physician Galen, the representative of the two-seed theory, whose insights were still widely adopted among Luther's contemporaries, believed that the combining of blood and spirit occurred in spermatic and ovarian vessels. The humor was thereafter transferred to male and female testicles for further "concocting." The circuit was the same for both sexes, since their genitals were alike yet reverse: the man's hotter body temperature had caused his genitals to emerge from the body, while the woman colder temperature meant that she did not have the heat within her required for the full growth of her genitals. For Galen, sexual desire was a consequence of the buildup of semen, and in the case of retention of semen—that is, a blockage of some kind in its proper outflow—one's health was endangered. Probable causes for retention could be, for instance, undernourishment, fever, nosebleeds, or vomiting. For women especially, melancholy or hysteria could result if the retention of the menses took place without pregnancy.<sup>170</sup>

In contrast, Aristotle (384–322 BC), whose influence in the beginning of the sixteenth century was at least as considerable as Galen's, had regarded the female as incapable of producing seed fully, due to her coldness. Woman's semen was thus deficient. Since her body lacked the ability to fully concoct blood and spirit, she had within her more blood than a man, which bled from her regularly during menses. Thus, female menstrual blood and milk were of the same material as semen, but unfinished as such—and incapable of turning into authentic semen. According to the Aristotelian understanding, also called the "one-seed theory," conceiving was accomplished by male semen only, as it was "the key to life."<sup>171</sup> Male semen was the proper source from which the new person was built up. On the basis of this insight, woman was merely the receiving party. Her menstrual blood, which was unformed matter, needed outer heat and power—that of man—to transform liquids into a human body of a baby. Hence, the significance of the male sex, on the one hand, and the secondary position of the female sex, on the other, was specifically proved in reproduction in Aristotelian theory.<sup>172</sup>

Luther was in several ways bound to his cultural heritage in matters of bodily functions. Woman's fertility became for him one of the key issues in validating the linkage between the female body, its proper functions, and a proper feminine

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169 Lemay 1981, 166; MacLehose 1996, 5; Shaw 1998, 66.

170 Shaw 1998, 58, 66–67; 70–72.

171 Bullough 1994, 31.

172 Bullough 1994, 31–32; MacLehose 1996, 7; Shaw 1998, 66, 68–69; Presti 2014, 932–933.

way of being. In his opinion, a fertile woman was altogether physically fit, clean, and happy (*die aber fruchtbar sind, sind gesunder, reynlicher und lustiger*), as he explained in *On Married Life*.<sup>173</sup> One of the most serious deficiencies of womanhood from Luther's point of view was indeed the woman's incapability to have children, which Luther explained by corruption of the human body.<sup>174</sup>

According to Luther, barren women (*unfruchtbar weyber*) were model examples of corrupt bodies, for they were in his opinion unhealthy and feeble. The prevention of bodily functions caused the body to strike back at itself. That which had been created by the body to be used in procreation was forced to be digested by the same body. This usually did not succeed, and hence the body became "unhealthy, enervated, sweaty, and stinking (*ungesunde, schwache unnd schwenstige, stinckende leybe werden*).” Putting it bluntly, Luther noted that woman's flesh and blood became nothing less than poisoned.<sup>175</sup>

Luther was of the opinion that the maintenance of the health of the woman was guaranteed via intercourse.<sup>176</sup> Luther's view reflects the way people already in the medieval period had illuminated the body—it was a scene of fertility and decay rather than sexuality as such, as Caroline Walker Bynum has stated.<sup>177</sup> Infertility was commonly understood as a defect of women in the late Middle Ages, and it was considered a punishment or a curse.<sup>178</sup> For their part, medical texts noted that infertility was known in both women and men, yet in practice they directed most of their attention to women.<sup>179</sup> Regular menstruation, for instance, was deemed to be crucial for a woman's health—and, consequently, her fertility—by both physicians and common people.<sup>180</sup>

Luther did not directly discuss the question of the role of female semen in reproduction—he instead treated the topic tacitly. As Susan Karant-Nunn has maintained, “Luther thought that the more seed and blood a woman had, the more fertile she would be, which is to say, the better able she would be to fulfill God reproductive assignment.”<sup>181</sup> Moreover, Luther's depiction of the distorted process of reproduction seems somewhat similar to the Galenic one: the reproductive liquids produced in the body were, for some reason or another, prevented from flowing and transforming. Because of this, the woman became ill—in Luther's words, anemic, sweaty, and smelling.

173 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 301. *On Married Life*. Kirsi Stjerna has also paid attention to the connection between fertility and womanhood in Luther's anthropology. Stjerna 2004, 34.

174 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 301. *On Married Life*.

175 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 301. *On Married Life*.

176 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 62; Roper 2016, 297.

177 Bynum 2012, 182.

178 Stjerna 2004, 32.

179 Green 2011, 187.

180 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 65.

181 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 9.

However, as Susan Karant-Nunn has pointed out, Luther does not seem to have been particularly affected by the progress of the anatomical views of the present day, but rather by common opinions,<sup>182</sup> which nevertheless can be regarded as based on old yet widely repeated views about the body and its functions. It is only reasonable to assume that Luther was to some extent familiar with the medical theories concerning male and female semen, reproduction, and its troubles.

In his reading of the *Sermons*, Cortright has come to the conclusion that Luther was a representative of the one-seed theory. He suggests this on the basis of Luther's notions of woman as a domestic creature built by God for man. This suggests, according to Cortright, that "a woman was a passive recipient" in the reproductive act.<sup>183</sup> Given Luther's overall evaluation of the woman's position in relation to the man's, the interpretation seems plausible. The understanding of the inevitable production of semen, for its part, validated Luther's view of the female body as an apparatus of reproduction, and thus of childbirth and mothering as natural functions of womanhood. If one seeks a religious-political motive behind his viewpoints, in *On Married Life* the question was undoubtedly one of Luther using female bodiliness to validate his claim for matrimony being the basic unit of society.

Whereas Luther discussed woman's seed in a very practical manner in *On Married Life*, he applied the term in a soteriological sense in the *Sermons*:<sup>184</sup> "Woman's seed ... a natural child (*weibs samen ... ein natuerlich kind*)"<sup>185</sup> was able to correct the damage the woman had done by causing the fall. Even if God had the highest authority in terms of choosing the woman, the time, and the place for the redemptive performance, as Luther maintained,<sup>186</sup> he did not present the woman as a thoroughly passive party either. The child was to have his substance from the mother (*ein kind das fleisch und blut von der mutter bringet*), but the most important dimension was that both the mother and the child could acknowledge one another.<sup>187</sup> Although Luther's emphasis with the latter notion was plausibly to stress the humanity of Christ, it similarly underlined the importance of a specific woman as his mother, as well as the bonding between a child and a mother, an issue that Luther did not bring forward in other contexts in the early 1520s.

Mickey Mattox has analyzed Luther's discussion of the woman's seed and made the conclusion that

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182 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 4,9.

183 Cortright 2011, 110.

184 WA 24, esp. 98b–100b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 139a–140a, 150a.

185 WA 24, 98b. (WA 14, 139b.) *Sermons on Genesis*. In WA 14: "...semine mulieris vel naturali filio."

186 WA 24, 109b. (WA 14, 151a.) *Sermons on Genesis*. See also Mattox 2003a, 60–61.

187 WA 24, 98b. (WA 14, 139b.) *Sermons on Genesis*.



Eve and her husband passed on this faith to their children, he [Luther] insisted, and it set the terms of self-understanding in the patriarchal households. ... The daughters of Eve desired to bear the posterity of their race not because they were sexually unrestrained, but because they hoped to bear the promised "seed."<sup>188</sup>

Mattox thus states that Luther defended motherhood as the role for all women—not simply because it was rooted in their bodies but especially since it had to do with their salvation, and the salvation of all humankind.

The topic that Luther discussed—a motherly mission of enabling the salvation of humankind through believing in God's promise and delivering the promised seed—has, in my opinion, at least three dimensions. First, it seems that in Luther's view the discussion about the promised seed strengthened the principle of the woman as a procreative unit. As in Luther's anthropology concerning both sexes, also in the case of women particularly the fall seems to stress the way of being, the duties, and the relations based already on creation—an idea discussed in the previous chapter as well. Second, motherhood became a reversal of unbelief and the act of eating the fruit, which caused the fall of humankind. Similar to how a woman had been the instrument in the fall, another woman was to be the instrument in redemption; that is, Mary compensated for the misbehavior of her sister, Eve. In the case of other women than Mary, the discussions seemed to stress the importance of faith in the role of the mother, which was covered in the previous chapter in the context of labor as female martyrdom.

My third point relates to the former two notions, as well as to Luther's motives. I suggest that Luther's discussion concerning women who could not wait to become selected as the mother of Christ, which Mattox has treated as well, was related to his mission of justifying matrimony as God's order. He explicated this in the manuscripts of the *Sermons*: he regarded the marriages in the Old Testament as model examples for contemporary Christians.<sup>189</sup> Therefore, the whole topic of woman's seed in the *Sermons* was connected to the female body, to the proper way of being—not only for women but also for men—and, ultimately, to the salvation of humankind. This further supports the analysis made in the previous chapters that Luther's views on human bodiliness—in this case the bodiliness of women—were, to borrow Bynum's words, "integrally bound to ... identity – and therefore finally to whatever one means by salvation."<sup>190</sup>

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188 Mattox 2003a, 61–62. In the *Sermons on Genesis*, see WA 24, 122b. Similarly WA 14, 156b–157b.

189 See, e.g., WA 14, 156a–157a. *Sermons on Genesis*.

190 Bynum 1995a, 11.

## BREAKING THE FEMALE IDEAL: WOMAN'S CLAIM OF MASTERY OF HER OWN BODY

Luther emphasized the ideal of a submissive and humble wife and mother. Her body was in God's and her husband's use and she bore her burdens like a martyr—being joyous in faith although troubled in body. But what if she refused this role? In this section I will treat the case of a stubborn wife (*eyn halstarrig weyb*), which Luther presented in *On Married Life*. In spite of the brevity of the case, it offers an illustrative view not only on Luther's way of connecting the female with bodiliness, but also and especially on his way of standardizing the female way of being, as well as judging improper behavior. Luther's discussion further highlights the viewpoints of authority and hierarchy between the sexes.

The case is discussed in the second section of the treatise, wherein Luther explained the grounds for divorce. Luther's first ground was impotence,<sup>191</sup> and the second adultery,<sup>192</sup> which I have treated in Chapter II.2. The third reason for divorce was that one "does not pay the marital debt and does not want to be with him [her husband] (*die ehliche pflicht nicht tzalen, noch bey yhm seyn will...*)."<sup>193</sup> Luther was one of very few evangelicals who regarded that refusal of sexual intercourse in marriage was a suitable reason for divorce. As a matter of fact, Joel Harrington has even concluded that only John Brenz (1499–1570), a theologian and evangelical activist who worked in the Duchy of Württemberg, shared Luther's view concerning this particular issue.<sup>194</sup> Harrington has pointed out, however, that in practice both Luther and Brenz were hesitant to admit that divorce was justifiable on the ground of neglecting one's marital duty.<sup>195</sup>

Luther began his discussion on the subject strongly:

One can find such a stubborn wife (*eyn halstarrig weyb*) who has the authority (*seynen kopff auff setzt*, lit. who sits above the husband's head) and even if the husband fell into unchastity ten times, she does not care a whit. Here is the time for the husband to say: "if you don't want, someone else will; if the wife will not, the maid will come."<sup>196</sup>

As can be read in the passage, Luther did not treat refusal of sex as a biological problem, that is, frigidity. He discussed impotent women briefly in connection with male impotency, and he regarded female impotence to be rarer than that.<sup>197</sup> Hence, he did not regard sexual coldness as a result of unbalanced bodily humors

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191 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 287. *On Married Life*. Impotents will be discussed in chapter V.2.

192 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 287–290. *On Married Life*.

193 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 290. *On Married Life*.

194 Harrington 2005, 89.

195 Ibid., 89–90.

196 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 290. *On Married Life*.

197 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 278. *On Married Life*.

or qualities. The classical understanding of the significance of bodily humors and qualities defining human temperature, action, health, and sickness was commonly applied,<sup>198</sup> and Luther was familiar with those, but his explanation instead noted that such wives were first and foremost stubborn: they deliberately chose to reject their husbands' sexual needs.

A woman's social status as either unmarried or married dictated the proper sexual behavior expected from her. Of course, social norms did not only specify whether a woman was entitled to sexual relations (as a wife) or not (as unmarried): the question of proper sexual behavior within marriage was complex, and it had been the worry of pastors well before Luther, as the medieval penitentials prove, for instance.<sup>199</sup> Furthermore, during the late Middle Ages, one of the most common accusations for wives who refused marital sex was that they rejected motherhood.<sup>200</sup>

Instead, the main theme that arises from this case concerns power and hierarchy between men and women, not offspring as such. Luther used the German expression "*seyne kopff auff setzt*" to describe the position held by the wife in a marriage that was sexually unsatisfactory for the husband. Literally, the phrase can be translated as "sitting above the husband's head" and thus holding authority above him. What Luther implied was that the power relations of the spouses had been reversed. On the basis of Luther's text, it seems that for him the avoidance of marital sex was a feminine flaw. Spouses were entitled to demand intercourse from each other, due to the conjugal duty promised in marriage vows, as has been noted previously. Thus, the problem involved socially undesired behavior and, because it was not a biological defect, had the potential to be corrected.

The seriousness with which Luther treated the topic is revealed by the punishment he considered suitable for the stubborn wife. If other measures, such as two or three warnings by the husband or public knowledge of her stubbornness (*hallstarrickeyt*), were insufficient to get the wife to adopt the correct behavior, the civil government had the right to enforce the death penalty:

Where now the other refuses and does not want [to fulfill the conjugal duty], he robs his body (*nympt und raubet es seynen leyb*), which he had given to the other, and that is in fact contrary to marriage and dissolves it. Therefore the civil government must compel the wife or put her to death (*weyb tzwingen oder umb bringen*).<sup>201</sup>

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198 For bodily humors and qualities, see Lemay 1981, 166; MacLehose 1996, 4–5; Shaw 1998, 27–28, 53–54, 65–66, 70–72.

199 James Brundage, for instance, has distilled the amount of regulations in medieval penitentials humorously yet truthfully in his table "The sexual decision-making process according to the penitentials." Brundage 1987, 162. See also Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 61; Karant-Nunn 2012a, 13.

200 Karras 1999, 170.

201 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 290. *On Married Life*.

The husband was entitled to search for a new wife, similar to the biblical example of King Ahasuerus, who took Esther in place of Vashti.<sup>202</sup>

Dealing with disobedient wives was diverse in the sixteenth century but nevertheless always reflective of husbandly power, as Merry Wiesner-Hanks has noted: the power of husbands over their wives was a given fact. In France, men could insist on imprisoning their disobedient wives, whereas in Italy or Spain wives could be conveyed to convents or houses “of refuge for repentant prostitutes.” The courts usually accepted the physical disciplining of wives in certain cases, although this was held to certain standards. These included, for example, the prohibition to use violence that resulted in bloodshed or the allowance to use a stick of a specified size for beating.<sup>203</sup> Generally speaking, violence was a means for husbands to maintain their status as *pater familias*, and, generally speaking, an extreme way to uphold their male honor.<sup>204</sup>

In his texts from 1516–1517, Luther still advised husbands to discipline their stubborn wives physically—an advice which was in line with the contemporary customs and laws.<sup>205</sup> However, by 1522 he did not give this guidance anymore. As a matter of fact, he kept reformulating the question of marital violence in the 1520s, and in the beginning of 1525 in his sermon *Marital Estate*, Luther noted explicitly that it was improper to represent one’s masculinity through violence.<sup>206</sup>

Luther’s way of illustrating the punishments in *On Married Life* derived, as can be read in the text, from the idea of the marital relationship dying when the wife refused to give her body to her spouse. Interestingly, the husband’s authority over his wife was depicted by Luther as stages of punishments. The first demonstration of power relations concerning the couple’s private life was a nonpublic correction of the wife in the form of warnings. The second stage of punishment was public shaming, which appears to have fortified the underdog position of the woman. The last stage, that is, the one given by civil government, was the apex of punishments and thereby represented most fully the disparity in power relations between the sexes. In Luther’s language, the judiciary became an image of masculine power over women. One aspect of the power relations also involved the parallel between God’s will and the husband’s rights. In Luther’s text, the flip side of God’s

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202 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 290. *On Married Life*.

203 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 284. Courts generally held as appropriate that the diameter of the stick should not exceed that of the husband’s thumb.

204 For violence and male honor, see Karras 2003, 60. For marital violence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Lidman 2008.

205 Mattox 2003a, 56. Regarding the advice on disciplining wives in Luther’s sermons concerning the Ten Commandments 1516–1517, see WA 1, 398–521.

206 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate*.

word in the Scriptures to give oneself to the other in marriage was the husband having rights to his wife's body.

Female sexuality, which was at the core of the matter together with issues of power and authority, was somewhat muddled in Luther's discussion of the stubborn wife—compared to his overall evaluation of sexuality. It was common among Luther's ancestors and contemporaries to regard that men could maintain self-control over their desire while women could not suppress their lust. This insight connected the female with irrationality, lust, and disorder on the one hand, and the male with rationality, self-control, and order, on the other.<sup>207</sup> Scholastics, for instance, regarded that women had greater sexual desire than men and a lesser ability to control themselves with reason.<sup>208</sup> Luther presented this view himself in many of his texts as well.<sup>209</sup>

However, what Luther was signaling in his wordings in this context, albeit implicitly, was that a stubborn wife could resist the temptation of sexual desire, and that the refusal to fulfill the conjugal debt was merely a female feature. In other words, she had self-control over her lust since the question was not of a physical defect but a conscious choice. This opposes Luther's overall view of sexuality as an uncontrollable force: as I have noted in Chapter II, in other contexts Luther did not regard the control of desire as possible for any normal human being, whether female or male. If both of the spouses were physically healthy, there apparently was no situation where the husband should refuse intercourse. The more important thing, however, is that the man's refusal would not have posed a threat to the power relations.

It seems that the case served Luther as a warning for his contemporaries of reversed gender roles. It is possible that Luther brought up the issue of women rebuffing marital sex in *On Married Life* since it was a real-life problem, which he perhaps had been told about in pastoral situations. Yet a more important factor than the possible origin of the discussion is, from my point of view, the educational aspect of the case. In this case he did not concentrate on the nature of human sexuality *per se*—and ponder, for instance, why a stubborn wife was not compelled by her innate burning desire. Even though Luther's rhetoric concerning human sexuality was otherwise fierce, it was just that way in contexts where he needed it to be. In this discussion, he concentrated only on the question of the proper way of being that the woman should accept in regard to her husband. He treated this kind of a case as an exception to the common rule, the common rule being, of course, woman's obedience and willingness to succumb to marital duty. Because refusing marital sex was in this case first and foremost an expression of a woman's own will,

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207 Bynum 2002, 151–179; Karant-Nunn 2012a, 6.

208 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 52.

209 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 137.

even a manifestation of independence as her placement above the husband's authority, it threatened to lead to problems that could unbalance the gender system, that is, male dominance not only in a relationship but in the whole of society. This is also why Luther judged it harshly.

### 3. WRITING TO FEMALE WRITERS: LUTHER BEING PRACTICAL

This chapter aims to explore whether the picture Luther painted of womanhood in his theoretical texts, as well as his personal letters to male recipients, deciphered thus far, was also maintained by him in practical contexts regarding women in real life. In order to do this, I have chosen to examine Luther's letters, the very practical genre of his texts, to his female contemporaries. There are, however, only a few letters to female recipients from Luther, preserved in WA, from this particular time period. In fact, the letters used in this chapter are the only extant ones addressed to women during the period from 1520 to 1524. Thus, it is not possible to make a sufficiently extensive analysis to draw a thorough comparison of theory and practice.

This chapter nonetheless presupposes that even the paltry number of Luther's letters to women creates a definite counterpart for his discussions on women and their capabilities in the theoretical genre, such as treatises and sermons. In addition to remarks concerning his three letters to upper-class women, the main attention will be paid to the cases of Katharina Schütz Zell (1498–1562) and Florentina von Oberweimar (c. 1509–?), two women whom Luther contacted through written correspondence.<sup>210</sup>

As has become evident, Luther did not walk on eggshells in his theoretical texts when his female contemporaries were under consideration. Quite the reverse, he could judge them to be talkative, complaining, and unable to resign themselves to the ruling of men. In *On Married Life*, for instance, Luther drew a picture of women not capable of literary but only oral "skills":<sup>211</sup>

If women would write books, they would write exactly the same things about men [by this Luther did not mean complimentary insights, rather quite the opposite]. But what they have not written, they express surely by complaining (*klagen*) and yapping (*klaffen*) when they get together.<sup>212</sup>

Luther here implicitly presented at least three features that he thought were characteristic of womanhood. First, he supposed that women thought the same way about men as men did of them, speaking mainly of men's vices and their dissatisfaction with them. Interesting to note is that, other than in this context when spea-

210 I have also discussed Luther's relations with both of these women in an article focused on Schütz Zell's and von Oberweimar's self-authorization. See Mikkola 2014a.

211 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 292–293. *On Married Life*.

212 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 293. *On Married Life*.

king of mutual dissatisfaction, Luther did not parallel women's and men's thoughts this directly in any other place in the texts examined.

My second notion relates to expressions that Luther used to describe women's talk, namely, complaining (*klagen*) and yapping (*klaffen*),<sup>213</sup> both of which are negatively charged words. *Klagen* expresses dissatisfaction by lamenting, grumbling, and bemoaning. *Klaffen*, on the other hand, refers to a dog's barking and yapping. Thus, in terms of oral skills Luther described femininity with harsh, even pejorative images. Thirdly, Luther seems to think that gathering together to thrash things out was a characteristic of women since they did not have the opportunity or ability to write things down. Thus, writing, a cultivated way of expressing oneself, became a characteristic of men, while everyday conversation, which did not require training or more sophisticated expression, characterized women.

Writing—that is, acting as an author—had gained several meanings throughout the Middle Ages. Laurel Amtower has explained that authorship had four connotations in medieval language: *auctor* was presumed to be connected with the Latin verbs *agere* (to act or perform), *augere* (to grow) and *auire* (to tie), as well as to the Greek noun *authentia* (authority). Through performing the act of writing and thus “tying” verses together, an author brought a text into being by making it grow. He was an authority, for “an auctor was one whose words formed both font and origin of all ethical or universal truths for the thoughtful individual who followed him.”<sup>214</sup> In both the temporal and spiritual world, an author was supposed to be closer to the word of Christ, the Logos.<sup>215</sup> Due to the foregoing, it is not surprising that Luther considered only men as the sources of texts. How did he react, then, to the texts written by real-life women and to the women themselves?

#### **“ACT... AND HOLD YOUR FRIENDS TO IT AS WELL.” LETTERS TO UPPER-CLASS WOMEN 1523–1524**

The letters that will be analyzed in this section were targeted at upper-class women who had approached Luther with the intention of getting his advice on certain problems. The first of the letters is addressed to three court ladies, Hanna von Draschwitz, Milia von Ölsnitz, and Ursula von Feilitzsch;<sup>216</sup> the second to a nun,

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213 In modern German, the form *kläffen* is used to refer to complaining. *Klaffen* in modern German means “to gape.”

214 Amtower 2000, 82. Amtower follows the demonstration of A. J. Minnis in her text. Briggs defines writing as both composition and inscription. He also remarks on the overlapping and interdependent character of writing, reading, and literacy. See Briggs 2000, 398–399.

215 Amtower 2000, 82.

216 WA BR 3, no. 625, 93–94. To three court ladies (June 18, 1523).

possibly called Hanna von Spiegel,<sup>217</sup> and the third to three nuns, whose names are not mentioned in the letter.<sup>218</sup>

The aim of the letter to the three court ladies is revealed at the beginning of Luther's text:

Mr. Nicholas von Amsdorf has reported your request to me and the abuse that you have experienced on account of my books from the court at Freiberg; and in addition he requested me to write you a letter of consolation (*eyn trostbrieff*).<sup>219</sup>

The motive to write to these women arose, as Luther mentioned, out of the request of the women themselves through Luther's friend Nicholas von Amsdorf (1483–1565). The letter was printed in Wittenberg on the initiative of Hieronymus Schurf (1481–1554), a jurist and supporter of Luther, and Nickel Schirlenz, a printer from Wittenberg.<sup>220</sup>

Freiberg was located in Albertine Saxony, and the court was in ruling by Henry IV of Saxony (1473–1541),<sup>221</sup> the cousin of Frederick the Wise. Henry was also the younger brother of George (1471–1539), the duke of Albertine Saxony, who opposed evangelical claims for clerical marriage, for example.<sup>222</sup> In 1512, Henry had married Katharina of Mecklenburg (1487–1561), who developed an evangelical leaning toward the end of 1523, mainly through Luther's writings.<sup>223</sup> The court ladies that Luther was writing to were those of Katharina, whom Henry had dismissed—being three of his wife's six ladies—for reading and possessing Luther's books.<sup>224</sup>

Luther addressed the women as “my special friends in Christ (*meynen besondern freundynn ynn Christo*)”<sup>225</sup> and “my dear sisters (*meyn lieben schwestern*)”<sup>226</sup> despite the fact that he did not know them, as is revealed from the text. This was not exceptional, since Luther seems merely to have been following the widely adopted art of letter-writing, the *ars dictaminis* or *ars dictandi*, with this salutation. He used similar idioms in the letter to Hanna von Spiegel, whom he called “Honorable, dear maiden Hanna (*Ehrbare, liebe Jungfrau Hanna*).”<sup>227</sup> In the letter to the three nuns,

217 WA BR 3, no. 695, 204. To a nun, possibly Hanna von Spiegel (December 14, 1523). For analysis of the recipient, see Bebermeyer 1933, 203.

218 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327–328. To three nuns (August 6, 1524).

219 WA BR 3, no. 625, 93, 4–6. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

220 Bebermeyer 1933, 93.

221 For the location, see the map in Plummer 2012, 66. Henry IV was also known as Henry the Pious (*Heinrich der Fromme*).

222 Plummer 2012, 68, 78–79, and *passim*. For an analysis of the differences between Ernestine and Albertine Saxony, see also p. 85, for instance.

223 NDB 1977, 325.

224 Bebermeyer 1933, 92.

225 WA BR 3, no. 625, 93. To three court ladies (June 18, 1523).

226 WA BR 3, no. 625, 94.

227 See WA BR 3, no. 695, 204, 1.



not in the salutation but the post scriptum, he wrote: “To the hands of three cloistered virgins, my dear sisters in Christ, written in friendship (*[c]zu handen den dreyen kloster Junckfrawen, meynen lyeben Schwestern In Christo, gschribenn freunthlich*).”<sup>228</sup>

Luther compared the court women to oppressed Christians, about whom Paul<sup>229</sup> and Christ himself<sup>230</sup> spoke in the New Testament. He credited the women for being in God’s favor, noting: “...you are enlightened by God’s grace (*yhr von Gottis gnaden erleucht*), and they [opponents of evangelical views] are blind and obdurate...”<sup>231</sup> Furthermore, he encouraged them to “act... and hold your friends to it as well.”<sup>232</sup> Luther thus presented the three women as model examples of Christian faith: they had maintained their belief in the midst of hardships. In this way, the publication of the letter also becomes understandable—the reason was both political and pastoral: Luther’s words were obviously regarded as important in strengthening evangelical identity. The fact that the examples were female was thus not an issue when the identity of a proper Christian was built by Luther and other evangelical males, in this case the jurist Schurf and the printer Schirlenz.

The letter to Hanna von Spiegel, which Luther wrote approximately six months after the one to the court ladies, can be somewhat similarly deemed as Luther’s effort to strengthen von Spiegel’s evangelical identity in particular and to enhance the evangelical way of life in general. Von Spiegel, an ordained nun, had written to Luther about her wish to get married, possibly to receive his support, as can be judged from Luther’s words.<sup>233</sup> Although Luther supported the idea, he was hesitant to use his authority in the matter.<sup>234</sup> Apparently, as Gustav Bebermeyer writes, von Spiegel had promised herself to a man below her social status.<sup>235</sup> According to Marjorie Plummer, the engagement to a non-noble was such a scandal for her family that they sought Luther’s help in preventing the two lovers from being united. Their reaction was quite common, for noble families often disapproved of their daughters’ marriages to lower estates.<sup>236</sup>

Instead of supporting her family, in his letter to von Spiegel Luther maintained that it was of no importance whatsoever whether one was noble or non-noble—for what mattered was “joy and love (*Lust und Liebe*)” between the marrying

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228 WA BR 3, no. 766, 328, 48–49.

229 Compare I Cor. 4:12: “We wear ourselves out from working with our own hands. When insulted, we bless. When persecuted, we endure.”

230 Compare Matt. 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you...”

231 WA BR 3, no. 625, 93, 15–16. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

232 WA BR 3, no. 625, 94, 34–35. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

233 WA BR 3, no. 695, 204, 1–3. To a nun, possibly Hanna von Spiegel (December 14, 1523).

234 WA BR 3, no. 695, 204, 5–8.

235 Bebermeyer 1933, 203.

236 Plummer 2012, 239–240. See also pp. 234–235.

parties. These building blocks of marital life made one well worth the other, despite possible differences in their social standing. However, he simultaneously reminded von Spiegel to pursue marriage not for the reason of the “vain heat of love (*nicht eitel Liebesbrunst*),” but to search for God’s blessing and grace.<sup>237</sup> Luther’s presentation to von Spiegel that marriage was not about social rank but about love may not just have been a display of romantic idealism on his part, however, but rather the prevailing practice of necessity.

When the evangelical teaching—including that concerning the cloister vows—began to gain ground, many nuns and monks preferred life outside their convents and monasteries as a result. However, beginning a new life outside the walls posed serious problems, especially for religious women. The number of suitable spouses was rather limited: Plummer maintains that before clerical marriage was locally accepted, several laymen showed reluctance in marrying a former nun.<sup>238</sup> Family interferences and the lack of a proper dowry imposed further obstacles to women’s laicization, not to mention their age being possibly too advanced for the marriage market.<sup>239</sup> While it was possible for former monks to work as school teachers or preachers, similar options were not open for religious women.<sup>240</sup> Due to these reasons, among others, and following the pattern of other noble or elite women, former nuns were likely to marry men of a lower estate than theirs.<sup>241</sup> Indeed, even marriage to an evangelical pastor signified a definite decline in a noble woman’s status.<sup>242</sup>

Luther also discussed the possibilities for religious women in his letter to three nuns whom he wrote in August 1524. The nuns had written to Luther due to their pondering of whether to leave the convent and the reasons for which it could be done.<sup>243</sup> Their letter to Luther came during the period when leaving the cloister was an act executed by the individual herself. Already during the mid-1520s, the evangelical-leaning city councils began to close cloisters in several areas, and thus their inhabitants lost their opportunity to choose, as they were often forced to leave.<sup>244</sup>

As Luther put it, two reasons were sufficient for abandoning the cloister vows: first, if nuns were not allowed to decide about their lifestyle but were coerced to stay

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237 WA BR 3, no. 695, 204, 10–12, 19–20.

238 Plummer 2012, 230.

239 Chrisman 1996, 153; Plummer 2012, 230, 234–235.

240 Chrisman 1996, 153.

241 Plummer 2012, 234.

242 Skocir & Wiesner-Hanks 2010, 17.

243 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327–328. To three nuns (August 6, 1524). This can be judged on the basis of p. 327, 2, 5–6.

244 Plummer 2012, 241. However, as Joan Skocir and Merry Wiesner-Hanks have pointed out, several convents were permitted to remain open even in the evangelical areas. See Skocir & Wiesner-Hanks 2010, 17.

in the convent,<sup>245</sup> and second, if they could not be content but were teased by their flesh.<sup>246</sup> Luther noted that women in general (*weibervolck*) were hesitant to admit that they indeed suffered desires of the flesh but, as he defended his position, having desires was a fact proven by both Scripture and experience (*schrift vnnd erfarunge*).<sup>247</sup>

Quite on the contrary to his theoretical writings, Luther did not univocally exhort the women to leave the cloister but left his position open. He ruminated on the issue and concluded that the women could stay in the convent (*ßo muget yr wol drynnen bleiben*) if they were allowed to “be free” and at least read and hear the Word of God,<sup>248</sup> thereby referring probably not only to Scripture but also to the Word offered by evangelical preachers. His stance is clearly revealed in the following:

I anticipate that you will leave the convent for these two reasons, or only one is enough, and you already mention the first. If it happens that in the future convents become matters of free choice, then you can certainly move back in again, if you have the grace and desire to do so.<sup>249</sup>

This advice certainly seems to be in contradiction with Luther’s public, polemical writings, where he had underlined human sexual desire and the necessity to act accordingly, that is, to get married as quickly as possible. Why did he treat these religious women with toleration toward their cloistered life? After all, Luther had already been involved in, for instance, the escape of twelve nuns from their cloister in Marienthorn, Nimbschen, in April 1523. This escape is perhaps one of the largest that Luther partook in. At least it has remained one of the widest known, since his future wife Katharina von Bora was among the nuns. Luther took responsibility for the nuns’ future well-being and thus played a significant role in finding them husbands.<sup>250</sup>

One possible explanation for the advice to stay in the convent is rather practical. Since the letter to the nuns was written in August 1524, it is more than probable that the evangelicals, including Luther, had already become aware of the complexity of incorporating former religious women into society.<sup>251</sup> Thus, pragmatic concerns, such as those described in this section, which were related to women religious’ laicization, and especially the personal commitment demanded by that process, may indeed have affected Luther’s willingness to let the women stay in the convent if possible.

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245 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327, 6–8.

246 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327, 21.

247 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327, 21–22.

248 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327, 16–20.

249 WA BR 3, no. 766, 327–328, 38–42. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

250 For the escape, see, e.g., Smith 1999, 747–749.

251 For the laicization of nuns and monks, see Plummer 2012, 131–166.

In all the letters analyzed in this section, Luther spoke formally and respectfully to the women he was dealing with, despite the recipient or the issue of the letter. Certainly the codes of letter-writing affected Luther's way of treating these women. However, one must note the societal standing of the recipients as well: they all were women of noble origin. Luther's tone is understandable, therefore, on the basis of the women's position in the corporative system, and perhaps also due to the favor that Luther had already gained in their eyes, favor which he may have regarded as rather valuable.<sup>252</sup>

Luther was by no means the only evangelical preacher who clearly regarded women, not only men, as possible allies. For instance, John Calvin also corresponded with upper-class women, and in the letters he could treat them as equals to men in spiritual matters.<sup>253</sup> Anne Conrad has noted that throughout history, it has been common in uprising movements for women to constitute a large number of the people. However, in the process of the movement being institutionalized and stabilized, women tend to be forced into the background. In her opinion, the sixteenth century was no exception to this sociological phenomenon.<sup>254</sup> In the delicate situation of forming and spreading the evangelical movement, it was crucial that every possible favorable contact was used, particularly those among the upper classes.<sup>255</sup> Hence, more than one's gender it was one's social status that seems to have been important.

## JUST ONE NUN AMONG OTHERS? THE CASE OF FLORENTINA VON OBERWEIMAR IN 1524

The case of Florentina von Oberweimar (c. 1509–?) appositely continues the discussion about religious women, their fate after leaving the convent, and, especially, Luther's way of responding to women in real life. Von Oberweimar escaped from her nunnery in the beginning of 1524, or perhaps already in the end of 1523, at the age of fifteen. Her apologia *Unterricht der erbarn und tugentsamen Jungfrauen Florentina von obern weymar, wie sie aus dem kloster durch Gottis hulff komen ist* ("Teaching of the honorable and pious maiden Florentina von Oberweimar, how

252 Luther's dependency on the aristocracy had become evident already, for instance, in his three-sermon series dedicated to Duchess Margaret of Brunswick in 1519. The first sermon (*Ein Sermon von dem Sakrament der Buße*), including the dedication, is also marked as letter no. 210 in WA BR, although the text itself cannot be found there. The timing of the first sermon is, however, dependent on Luther's correspondence. See WA BR 1, 537. For the three sermons, see the introduction in WA 2, 709–712.

253 Thompson 1988, 136–138; especially fn. 44.

254 Conrad 1999, 10, 15.

255 For networks between men in spreading the evangelical understanding of faith, see, e.g., Rublack 2005, 42–44.

she left the cloister with God's help") was published together with Luther's cover letter, marginal notes, and an epilogue during March or April of 1524.<sup>256</sup> Hence, the text in which Luther took a stand on von Oberweimar's case is quite different from a personal letter. His ideas were targeted at a wider audience instead of just von Oberweimar alone. Thus, this section will not only decipher von Oberweimar's text and Luther's response to it, but also compare his words in von Oberweimar's case with what he said to and about women in the private letters discussed in the previous section.

Not much is known about von Oberweimar or the different phases of her life. The most evidence about her is offered in her writing *Unterricht der erbarn und tugentsamen...*<sup>257</sup> Von Oberweimar was a noble daughter who had been sent to the Cistercian nunnery of Neu-Helfta<sup>258</sup> at the age of six, probably around 1515. The abbess of the nunnery was von Oberweimar's relative, Katharina von Watzdorf (abbess 1493–1534).<sup>259</sup> Von Oberweimar read Luther's writings probably from the beginning of the 1520s onward and, inspired by them, wrote him a letter<sup>260</sup> that has not, however, been preserved.

Von Oberweimar was hardly the first nun to escape from her convent. Twelve nuns had escaped in the spring of 1523 from their cloister in Nimbschen, including Katharina von Bora, as has been discussed formerly. And sixteen nuns had escaped from their convent in Wederstett in June 1523. It is possible that von Oberweimar was aware of these escapes before planning her own.<sup>261</sup>

Antje Rüttgardt has deemed von Oberweimar's writing as autobiographical but also as a model example of public propaganda against the cloister.<sup>262</sup> Rüttgardt thinks that von Oberweimar's address sought to justify her actions (genre being *Rechtfertigungsschreiben*),<sup>263</sup> and as such it can be regarded as an integral part of the ecclesiastical and societal discussion of the early 1520s. It was written to validate her reasons for leaving the cloister, which was a central theme when the proper Christian way of life or the right of nuns and monks to leave their cloisters was under discussion.

256 Pietsch 1899, 79–80; Rüttgardt 2007, 256–259. For the printed edition of von Oberweimar's text, see WA 15, 89–94. Henceforth, von Oberweimar's text is referred to as FO 1899 (1524), whereas Luther's prologue and epilogue are referred to as WA 15. In this way it is possible to do justice to von Oberweimar's voice instead of referring to it as part of Luther's writings.

257 Rüttgardt 2007, 258.

258 For the history of the nunnery, see Rüttgardt 2007, 264–272.

259 FO 1899 (1524), 89.

260 FO 1899 (1524), 91.

261 Rüttgardt 2007, 305.

262 Ibid., 258, 273. For the authenticity of the writing, see Rüttgardt 2007, 257. For the autobiographical sources, see, e.g., Jancke & Ulbrich 2005; Fulbrook & Rublack 2010.

263 Rüttgardt 2007, 256.

According to von Oberweimar's own words, she wrote the *Unterricht* to honor God but also to defend her own honor and good name (*meyne ehre und gueten namen*).<sup>264</sup> The question of honor was essential for every woman, as Karras has stated, and it particularly had to do with proper sexual behavior. In the late Middle Ages, female chastity and honor were ideal features, especially for virgins and wives.<sup>265</sup> Accordingly, nuns (but also monks) who escaped from their cloisters were easily suspected of immorality, especially if the escape was executed during nighttime and without the approval of one's abbess or abbot.<sup>266</sup> Due to this reason, von Oberweimar presented herself as passive and humble, and God's agency was emphasized:

But God, for whom all things are possible, arranged in his godly wisdom, against which the wisdom of this world is foolishness,<sup>267</sup> that one day after the meal when I went to my cell, the person who should have locked me up left the cell open. And I was able to escape with God's apparent help...<sup>268</sup>

She further described herself as an orphan who entrusted herself to God's care (*yhm alleyne verlassen weysen*),<sup>269</sup> and as "a languished, hungry sheep (*verschmachtem hungrigem schaff*)."<sup>270</sup> Stressing one's own humbleness was a typical rhetorical motif in the writings of women specifically, but also in those of men. For instance, Argula von Grumbach (c. 1492–c. 1554/7), a Bavarian lay reformer, called herself "a stupid woman" when validating her writings.<sup>271</sup> The purpose of this kind of *topos* of humility was to assure the readers' favorable attitude toward the writer. By using this *topos*, the writer expressed the limits that her sex or social status, for instance, created. Using humility as a rhetorical tool was intended to emphasize one's significance as a writer, but also the significance of the writing itself.

However, von Oberweimar did not hesitate to stress her own agency either. She noted: "So I have adopted spiritual [life] against my will. I let every pious Christian and lover of evangelical truth to evaluate what kind of weight to my conscience [it] has caused daily."<sup>272</sup> She thus consciously connected her writing and her own stand with the evangelical polemics against the cloister. She counted herself among pious Christians, that is, among the evangelicals, "the lovers of truth."

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264 FO 1899 (1524), 89, 13–15. See also 93, 25–27. For the gendered reasons for leaving the cloister, see Plummer 2012, 142, 231.

265 Karras 2003, 60.

266 Plummer 2012, 142.

267 Compare I Cor. 1:21: "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know God, God decided through the nonsense of our preaching to save those who believe."

268 FO 1899 (1524), 93, 9–12. See also 89, 7–8.

269 FO 1899 (1524), 91, 1–2.

270 FO 1899 (1524), 91 5–6.

271 AG 1995, 141. I have discussed Luther's view of von Grumbach in Mikkola 2016.

272 FO 1899 (1524), 90, 29–31.

Although she was merely fifteen when writing her text, von Oberweimar evaluated that she was able to gauge her abilities, the demands of cloistered life, and the evangelical writings that encouraged one to leave that life behind.<sup>273</sup>

Luther's prologue, epilogue, and marginal notes tell a slightly different story of von Oberweimar's agency than her own text. While she herself highlighted her right to make decisions concerning her own life, according to Luther her case was merely one example of the godlessness of the cloister. In his marginal notes, Luther judged that the Order of Neu-Helfta was actually disorder (*ein unordens weyse*),<sup>274</sup> and the abbess was Jezebel herself from the Old Testament, an idolater and a tyrant in her rule.<sup>275</sup> Luther's and von Oberweimar's different points of view are clear even in their headlines. Whereas von Oberweimar "left the cloister with God's help (*sie aus dem kloster durch Gottis hulff komen ist*),"<sup>276</sup> Luther saw the episode in terms of "how God rescued an honorable nun (*wie Got eyner Erbarn kloster Jungfrauen ausgeholffen hat*)."<sup>277</sup> In Luther's heading, von Oberweimar was presented as an object, while in her own she construed herself as a subject.<sup>278</sup> As such, Luther's view of von Oberweimar seems to have been in line with his statements concerning womanhood as a whole, with the emphasis being that the female was always other and, as such, the object of male agency.

The context and aim of Luther's text have to be taken into account, however, and these indeed differ greatly here from those in his personal letters to noblewomen discussed in the previous section. His epilogue was directed at five counts (*Grafen*) of Mansfeld, Günther IV, Ernst II, Hoyer VI, Gebhard VII, and Albert VII,<sup>279</sup> and it aimed at religious-political persuasion. Richard Cole has assessed that the text was written with "a respectful and thoughtful tone, intended to foster good will."<sup>280</sup> In Luther's opinion, the counts had to allow every nun and monk to decide for themselves whether they would stay in their convents and monasteries or whether they were happy to leave them.<sup>281</sup> Nuns and monks were presented by Luther as "poor prisoners" (*armen gefangen*).<sup>282</sup> This portrayal included an idea of their dependency on aristocrats, which probably was Luther's rhetorical means of persuading the counts to adopt his viewpoint.<sup>283</sup>

273 See more analysis of the writing in Mikkola 2014a, 327–329.

274 WA 15, 90, 25–26.

275 WA 15, 92, 15; 93, 6–8.

276 FO 1899 (1524), 89, 2–3.

277 WA 15, 85, 1–2.

278 Mikkola 2014a, 329.

279 Pietsch 1899, 80.

280 Cole 2013, 316, fn.28.

281 WA 15, 86, 4–6; 88, 18–20. For the attitude of the counts as regards the evangelical movement, see Rüttgardt 2007, 261–262.

282 WA 15, 88, 30–31.

283 Mikkola 2014a, 330.

The matter that Luther was talking about was of the utmost gravity: if the counts did not listen to Luther and take von Oberweimar's example into account, they would allow sinful burning of the flesh to happen right under their noses. Luther noted that

...nothing can be done with the disdainful, shameful desire of the flesh (*der schnoeden schendlichen lust willen des fleyschs*), which does not cease in cloisters. For the one who does not want to be pious, it [a sexual act] happens also by oneself or with another [person].<sup>284</sup>

This statement was connected in Luther's rhetoric to one premise of his anthropology, namely, human beings' nature to come together and multiply, as he explicated in the prologue.<sup>285</sup> In addition, it can be seen as part of evangelical rhetoric, which claimed that women had to be rescued from the demoralizing impact of their convent.<sup>286</sup> An essential part of this discussion is that women were presented by Luther not as active agents but as passive objects.<sup>287</sup>

Luther informed that he published the story of *diser Florentina*<sup>288</sup> as an example of the overall reprehensibility of cloistered life—after all, the story was only one of many.<sup>289</sup> However, the case of a noble-born nun can be regarded as an ideal example for him to have given the counts and other nobility, as it probably appealed to them due to similar social origins. Hence, the core of the matter was not von Oberweimar's story *per se* but the way in which her story could be used by Luther to justify the evangelical viewpoint of the harmfulness of cloistered life. Luther's principle was thus of primary importance, not von Oberweimar as a person.

This notion is further supported by Luther's way of highlighting his own authority and legitimizing his action: "...if they [the counts and possibly other rulers as well] knew what I know, they would perhaps not know how they could praise and respect me enough, or do anything more than I..."<sup>290</sup> The central theme in Luther's text was male agency—that of God, the counts, and his own. His rhetoric in this case was in line with the hierarchies of his time, a fact that may have led the counts to take Luther's point of view.<sup>291</sup>

However, despite the strategy of emphasizing male agency, Luther's epilogue and remarks to von Oberweimar's text do in fact signal his approval.<sup>292</sup> He did not

284 WA 15, 88, 21–23.

285 WA 15, 88, 23–26.

286 For the rhetoric, see Plummer 2012, 231.

287 Mikkola 2014a, 330.

288 WA 15, 88, 13.

289 WA 15, 87, 29–32.

290 WA 15, 88, 27–29.

291 Mikkola 2014a, 330.

292 Ibid.



judge her action but published the apologia, thereby lending his own authority to her deed. What Luther might have counseled von Oberweimar to do, had he written her a personal letter before the escape, remains a mystery. Perhaps he would have advised her similarly as the three nuns discussed previously, to remain in the cloister if it could be done freely and gladly. Possibly, however, he would have advised her to leave in any case, given her descriptions of her treatment in the convent.<sup>293</sup> Be that as it may, one can say that in his writing, Luther encouraged von Oberweimar as an active agent and a writer, just like he did in his letters to other noblewomen, although for strategic reasons in this public text he stressed the role of men and male agency.<sup>294</sup>

### AN EXAMPLE OF GOD'S FAVOR: THE CASE OF KATHARINA SCHÜTZ ZELL IN 1524

One particularly interesting case still remains to be discussed in this chapter: that of Katharina Schütz Zell (1498–1562), a lay reformer from Strasbourg. In this section I shall determine whether Luther's letter to her at the end of 1524 continues the rhetoric he had adopted in relation to other contemporary women discussed in this chapter: the language of approval toward their agency that, by and large, differed significantly from the idea—and indeed ideal—of women which Luther had presented in theory. As in the case of Florentina von Oberweimar, I will first explicate who Schütz Zell actually was and what particular writing Luther reacted to in 1524. Thereafter, I will discuss and analyze Luther's response.

Katharina Schütz,<sup>295</sup> a member of a well-off artisan family, was born probably in the beginning of 1498 in the free imperial city of Strasbourg. She was well-educated, albeit only in German, and thus she could both write and read well in the vernacular. According to scholars who have studied Schütz Zell, her piety was widely known, appreciated, and imitated in Strasbourg, especially among young women.<sup>296</sup> Schütz had learned the skill of tapestry weaving and intended to stay unmarried, providing for herself by means of a tapestry business. In her own words, she had esteemed herself as a church mother (*Kirchenmutter*) since she was a ten-year-old girl.<sup>297</sup>

However, from the late 1510s onward, after reading Luther's writings and hearing evangelical pastors in Strasbourg, Schütz began to favor the evangelical

293 For von Oberweimar's discussion of her treatment, see FO 1899 (1524), esp. 89–91; 93, 2.

294 The last conclusive remark is made also in Mikkola 2014a, 330.

295 For biographies of Katharina Schütz Zell, see esp. McKee 1999a, 3–229. See also Stjerna 2009, 109–131; Domröse 2011, 45–57.

296 McKee 1999a, 4–9, 12–28, Stjerna 2009, 112; Domröse 2011, 45.

297 McKee 1999a, 10–12, 14; Stjerna 2009, 111–112.

interpretation of faith. She married Matthew Zell, one of the pastors and preachers of Strasbourg, in December 1523.<sup>298</sup> According to Kirsi Stjerna, Schütz Zell “came to understand herself as a reformer, as a main player, so to speak, not only a recipient of the reforms preached by others.”<sup>299</sup> It was possible for Schütz Zell to take on this role, for her husband was, unlike many of the husbands of active women in the evangelical movement, a supportive one.<sup>300</sup> The noblewoman Argula von Grumbach, for example, was acting against her husband’s will in her evangelical faith that led her to publish several writings.<sup>301</sup>

Schütz Zell started active, lengthy writing soon after marrying, usually about current issues such as the evangelical priests’ right to marry. She kept publishing until 1558, that is, for 34 years, which was an exceptionally long period for a lay, middle-class person to write publicly. The duration of her active publishing can be regarded as remarkable, since most of the writing laywomen and laymen were able to get their texts published only for a few years, mostly during the 1520s.<sup>302</sup> An excellent example of these is the aforementioned von Grumbach, who published eight pamphlets during 1523–1524, but thereafter none.<sup>303</sup> Luther’s letter to Schütz Zell in 1524 was a response to her second treatise *Entschuldigung Katharina Schützinn/ für Matthes Zellen/ jren Eegemahel/ der ein Pfarrher und dyener ist im wort Gottes zů Straßburg. Von wegen grosser lügen uff jn erdiecht* (“Katharina Schütz’s apologia for her husband Matthias Zell, who is a pastor and a servant of God’s word in Strasbourg. On account of great, feigned lies.”).<sup>304</sup>

The evangelical movement was formally made known in Strasbourg through “tedious, almost scholastic disputations,” as Steven Ozment has described.<sup>305</sup> The city was indeed a scene for various doctrinal debates, and although the evangelical movement was supported by the authorities, in 1524 the clergy was still punished for their marriages.<sup>306</sup> That year, before Schütz Zell’s apologia, the catholic bishop of Strasbourg Wilhelm von Honstein (c. 1470–1541) had denied the privileges (beneficium) of six married clericals, including Schütz Zell’s husband, and later excommunicated all of them, which was the primary reason why Schütz Zell wrote

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298 McKee 1999a, 29–31, 40–41, 48–49; Stjerna 2009, 112–113. For discussion concerning clerical marriage in Strasbourg, see McKee 1999a, 42–49. For women’s reasons to marry clerics, see Plummer 2012, 211–243. Plummer discusses Schütz Zell’s motive shortly on p. 228 and concludes that it was a matter of genuine religious conviction.

299 Stjerna 2009, 112.

300 Stjerna 2009, 109–113.

301 Halbach 1999, 55.

302 Roper 1989, 2–3; McKee 1999a, xii; Zitzlsperger 2003, 379–380.

303 See, e.g., Matheson 1995.

304 KSZ 1999 (1524), 21–47.

305 Ozment 1975, 13.

306 Stjerna 2009, 114, 118.

the treatise.<sup>307</sup> The city was a religious-political arena of conflicts between catholic priests such as Thomas Murner (1475–c. 1537) and Conrad Treger (1480/83–1543) and evangelical pastors such as Martin Bucer (1491–1551).<sup>308</sup> Furthermore, disputes between evangelicals such as Luther and Andreas Karlstadt began to arise concerning topics like communion and baptism.<sup>309</sup> Elsie McKee has evaluated that the question of religious authority, reservations about clerical marriage, and the ambiguity of right doctrine were among the most important reasons for Schütz Zell to write her apology.<sup>310</sup>

Schütz Zell did not have any doubts whatsoever about her importance as a public agent, as the following quotation from her apologia, written in September 1524, indicates:

...I see how many souls already belong to the devil and continue so, which was also a reason that I have helped to raise up clerical marriage. With God's help I was also the first woman in Strasbourg who opened the way for clerical marriage, when I was then still not consenting or wishing to marry any man. However, since I saw the great fear and furious opposition to clerical marriage, and also the great harlotry of the clergy, I myself married a priest with the intention of encouraging and making a way for all Christians—as I hope has also happened. Therefore, I also made a little book in which I showed the foundation of my faith and the reason for my marriage...<sup>311</sup>

Schütz Zell wrote of herself not as a woman first, but as a Christian whose duty it was to act on behalf of other Christians.<sup>312</sup> She wanted to save the precious time of evangelical clerics by dealing with the issue of their marriage herself. Her inability to answer theological treatises written in Latin was not an obstacle either, as she put it.<sup>313</sup> Schütz Zell was, however, aware of the arguments that male theologians would use against her agency. For this reason, she sought to prove her public actions and writing by basing her arguments on biblical passages. She compared herself to powerful biblical and apocryphal women such as Judith,<sup>314</sup> Esther,<sup>315</sup> and the Queen of Sheba.<sup>316</sup> Through these examples, she demanded her right to act when men failed to do so.<sup>317</sup> She also used a comparison with Balaam's donkey,<sup>318</sup> which spoke when its master was blind to the angel—it justified the need to speak up when necessary.

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307 McKee 1999a, 51; Domröse 2011, 46.

308 McKee 1999a, 59–60.

309 Drescher 1908, 37–61, esp. 41–42; Brecht 1986, 163–165; Arffman 1994, 30–31.

310 McKee 1999a, 60–62.

311 KSZ 1999 (1524), 39–40. Translation by Elsie McKee.

312 KSZ 1999 (1524), 23; Mikkola 2014a, 331.

313 KSZ 1999 (1524), 30.

314 Compare Judith 13:6–8.

315 Compare Esther 7:10.

316 Compare I Kings 10:1.

317 KSZ 1999 (1524), 30, 33.

318 Compare Num. 22:21–35.

Furthermore, she reminded that, according to Paul, there was neither man nor woman in Christ (*in Christo ist weder man noch weyb*).<sup>319</sup>

All of these were metaphors and arguments that several laywomen used during the sixteenth century when arguing for their public role. They took Paul's insistence on women's silence in the congregation into account, but they also argued against it—using Paul's other texts as well as other biblical passages to prove their point, as Ulrike Zitzlspreger has noted.<sup>320</sup> Schütz Zell's main argument concerning her agency was that she had the right and the obligation to act to defend her faith in public, when needed, despite her sex.<sup>321</sup> Whether she extended this claim to other women besides herself seems improbable.<sup>322</sup> Her strategy of self-authorization was not unique in its form, though. Generally speaking, the practice of female self-authorization in writing had become increasingly extensive during the late medieval period.<sup>323</sup> It was rather common for women to argue that they were special cases, most often by alluding to the grace of God.<sup>324</sup>

Luther sent his letter to Schütz Zell soon after her apologia had been published. In the letter (dated December 17, 1524), Luther rejoiced that Schütz Zell “saw and knew” the kingdom of God, which was hidden from many others.<sup>325</sup> In addition, Luther expressed his pleasure about Schütz Zell's marriage. He was delighted that she had found a suitable husband, “through whom you daily and unceasingly are better able to learn and hear this [of God's kingdom]...”<sup>326</sup> Luther sent his greetings to Schütz Zell's husband, calling him “your lord, Mr. Matthew Zell (*deinen Herrn, Herr Matthias Zell*).”<sup>327</sup> Luther's method of paying his respects was not only the correct style of letter-writing but also, and especially, an acknowledgement of the fact that he was writing to a married woman, which could be considered as an improper act.

As I have noted in an article concerning Schütz Zell and Luther, his congratulations regarding Schütz Zell's marriage indicate that correspondence between the two was not intensive—Schütz Zell had, after all, been married almost a year by December 1524. It is probable that this was the first letter Luther wrote to Schütz

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319 KSZ 1999 (1524), 46.

320 Zitzlsperger 2003, 81.

321 Mikkola 2014a, 325. McKee has advanced a similar notion concerning the whole of Schütz Zell's production; see McKee 1999a, 390.

322 McKee 1999a, 55 (fn. 18), 396. See also Methuen 2010, 718.

323 The latter notion can be found, for example, in Chance 1999; Erler & Kowaleski 2003, 7.

324 See, e.g., Wiesner 1986, 9–10.

325 WA BR 3, no. 808, 406, 4. To Katharina Schütz Zell (December 17, 1524).

326 WA BR 3, no. 808, 406, 5–7. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

327 WA BR 3, no. 808, 406, 10–11.

Zell.<sup>328</sup> It may have been, as Elsie McKee has suggested, Luther's response to Schütz Zell after she had sent her apologia to him as a self-introduction.<sup>329</sup>

It is possible that Luther's main aim in his letter was to emphasize the hierarchical power relations between wife and husband, as the notion of husband as the teacher and wife as the hearer would suggest. It would also be in line with Luther's ideas of womanhood, described above. However, the focus of Luther's letter was not the Zell marriage as such but the apologia itself; otherwise it is safe to assume that he would have written his letter already earlier.<sup>330</sup> Luther's notion of Schütz Zell as one who knows God's kingdom strongly implies encouragement offered by Luther to Schütz Zell regarding both the publishing of her evangelical faith and her actions to aid the evangelical movement. As such, the emphasis on being illuminated by God was similar to Luther's statement to the three court ladies, where he had deemed the women to be enlightened by God's grace.

On the basis of these aspects, as well as the timing and the tone of the letter, I tend to regard Luther as a supporter of Schütz Zell's public agency. Furthermore, the lack of disapproval concerning her public writing and the lack of prohibitions from writing in the future support Luther's recognition. Also noteworthy is that Luther seems not to have written a single letter to Schütz Zell's husband, Matthew Zell, who was, after all, an enthusiastic evangelical along with his wife.

The encouragement of a woman to play an active role was not unique: I have formerly referred to John Calvin's strategies in comparison with Luther's. In fact, throughout the Middle Ages, several letters to women who were, one way or another, in "official positions" had been written in order to call the women to use their influence in societal, political, or ecclesiastical matters. As Ferrante has noted, not only empresses but also other learned women were considered worth approaching.<sup>331</sup> If Luther's letter to Schütz Zell is interpreted as a letter of support, as I would from my point of view, it can be said that Luther employed a similar practice with Schütz Zell as his predecessors and contemporaries had done. Lyndal Roper, for instance, has proved that Luther could very well have taken advantage of strategically useful relationships.<sup>332</sup> It is obvious that such persons were not only men but also women.

As Kirsi Stjerna has noted, Schütz Zell was "particularly devoted to Luther's theology" in spite of being influenced by a variety of evangelical characters.<sup>333</sup> As

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328 Mikkola 2014a, 326. McKee has been of the same opinion. See McKee 1999a, 65. The letter is one of the two letters existing in WA which are addressed to Katharina Zell.

329 McKee 1999a, 65–66.

330 Mikkola 2014a, 326.

331 Ferrante 2001, 881–882.

332 Roper 2010.

333 Stjerna 2009, 113. For KSZ's view of Luther, see McKee 2012.

she was in dialogue with several evangelicals who had a difference in opinion, it is possible that Luther sought to strengthen Schütz Zell's loyalty toward him. This interpretation is supported by the historical situation in Strasbourg, where debates concerning clerical marriage, on the one hand, and internal disputes within the evangelical movement, on the other, created tensions. Luther's possible intent to gain Schütz Zell's loyalty, as well as the lack of letters to Matthew Zell, confirms that he regarded her as a significant public agent.<sup>334</sup> It is safe to assume that Luther's message to Schütz Zell was similar to that which he had explicated to the other ladies: "Act... and hold your friends to it as well." In this respect, this could be considered as Luther's message to all of the women discussed in this chapter.

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The difference between Luther's overall formulations of the woman's proper way of being and his opinions in practical contexts has become quite evident in this chapter. On an overall level, the starting point of Luther's discussion of women in the first half of the 1520s rested on the insight that the woman and the female body were significant. However, she or her body did not exist independently but merely in relation to the man and the male body. His main source in deciphering his views was the Old Testament, to which he "was always inclined to turn," as Lyndal Roper has maintained.<sup>335</sup> Luther saw the female body and the woman's proper way of being as a continuum, with the latter derived directly from the former.

On a general level, Luther's view of proper womanhood can be interpreted as an emphasis on lived bodiliness. For Luther, physical factors set the ideal of the way a woman should live her life; it was first and foremost based on her body as an apparatus of procreation, both *ante* and *post lapsum*. According to Luther's general remarks, a woman in the post-lapsarian world lived primarily within her body, which gained its meaning—and was sanctified, in a sense—through the Christian mission of motherhood. In other words, the female body dictated the gendered way of being.<sup>336</sup>

The emphasis of a woman's life as fully based on her body being an apparatus of procreation was social-political and in line with contemporary views in that regard. It was largely due to Luther's motivation to reject the cloister and to

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334 Mikkola 2014a, 326.

335 Roper 2016, 282.

336 For example, Lyndal Roper has come to a similar conclusion in her rather short survey of Luther's writings that represent different decades. By using the word "destiny" to describe the gendered lives that were due to "natural" differences between the sexes, she has stated: "In Luther, [...] biology [i.e., sex difference] itself dictated different destinies..." Roper 1983, 38.

defend matrimony as the desired state for human beings in the context of social turmoil around the cloister vows. In this understanding, Luther joined in the ongoing discourse, which began forcefully in the beginning of the 1520s, dealing with questions concerning, for instance, the right to leave the cloister, the new social positions of monks, nuns, and priests, and the challenges posed by traditional social norms.<sup>337</sup>

I am not suggesting that Luther's view rose merely from the ecclesiastical and social-political situation, but it is clear that his interpretation of women's gendered way of being was greatly influenced by the historical context, both prevailing and preceding.<sup>338</sup> In his views concerning women, Luther was by no means a unique thinker, as I have proved above; similar viewpoints were presented by a host of his predecessors and contemporaries. Luther's similarity to other male thinkers in this question has not often been highlighted or even taken into account in studies of his views on women.

Essential for Luther's views on womanhood and the woman's way of being was the idea of gender hierarchy. In his writing, Luther exhibited an undeniably normative way of discussing women. Naturally, he was not just describing the power relations of the sexes or the otherness of women but also participating in strengthening these norms. Both his readings of the Scriptures and the practical deductions he made on the basis of them highlight that in his thinking, the man's power to define the woman was a given. In particular, Luther's discussion of the sexual relationship between female and male as a sphere of dominance and submission emphasized the idea of the otherness of the woman in a most profound way.

Nonetheless, the contradiction between Luther's theoretical ruminations, on the one hand, and his advice, as well as definitions of policy in practical situations, on the other, suggests a more fluid understanding of the limits that the woman's sex constituted. His views on female subordination were perhaps most visibly questioned by his approval of Katharina Schütz Zell's public agency. In the cases of Florentina von Oberweimar and the three nuns, he juxtaposed the understanding of the woman's mandatory commitment to the man and her inability to make decisions concerning her life. On the basis of Luther's letters to and about women in this time period, it seems that he valued them as representatives of the evangelical movement, and possible coworkers as such.

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337 Charles Cortright has also noted the significance of this context for Luther. Cortright 2011, 98–99. Marjorie Plummer has described the contemporary situation well in her study *From Priest's Whore to Pastor's Wife*. Plummer 2012. See also Brecht 1986, 30–34.

338 I am by no means the first one to make such a statement. See the notion, for example, in Karant-Nunn 2008, 167.

In previous research, it has been presented that real-life women were not necessarily, or even primarily, defined through theoretical stereotypes, especially when they were “acting for the common good.”<sup>339</sup> However, the male leaders of the Reformation had a tendency to treat women as examples of faith, not as theologians of equal value, for instance.<sup>340</sup> My examination has shown that Luther’s evaluation of these women was very much in line with these general viewpoints. Of course, the common good, in Luther’s case, was the good of himself and of the evangelical movement. I have noted formerly that it was common for medieval men, as well as those living in the beginning of the Early Modern Era, to use their relations with women to their own advantage—that is, the networks between men and women were as useful to them as those between men. Luther’s willing replies to women can thereby be understood as building and strengthening his networks with them—for his own advantage, of course.

For Luther, in the situation of trying to justify his and his coworkers’ interpretation of proper Christian living, it was natural as well as essential to make use of all people, regardless of their sex. Even though in principal the proper way of being for women was bound to their biology and thus to the strict power relations between women and men, in practice real-life women—not quite fitting the female ideal—were well worth Luther’s attention and appreciation.

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339 See Rublack 2002, 3.

340 For a discussion of women as examples of faith, see, e.g., Räisänen-Schröder 2014, 377–378, also fn. 82; Mikkola 2016, 60.



## IV CONSTRUCTION OF THE MALE BODY AND MASCULINITY

The analyses of this study have thus far merely touched on the issue of masculinity, although it has been essential to refer to men already in connection with the discussions concerning women. This part of the study will thus concentrate on what Luther deemed, along with his contemporaries and predecessors, to be the more perfect sex. I will ask whether in Luther's view there was as a profound connection with the male body and proper male way of being as there was in the case of women. Furthermore, what did it mean for men to be men in his rhetoric? How did Luther define the proper way of being for men?

These are questions that have been somewhat neglected in gender studies until recently. Male experience has, perhaps surprisingly, been overlooked in the scholarship of the Reformation period as well. One could assume otherwise, since Reformation studies has, after all, traditionally focused especially on male figures. This lack can be explained, however, by understanding that male experience has been regarded as universal experience of humankind—and as a result it has not been deemed essential for scholars to regard men's experience or thinking as particularly that of men. In 2002, Merry Wiesner-Hanks aptly maintained that gender studies to date had failed to take seriously men's "experiences as those of men,"<sup>1</sup> not as representatives of humankind, a point that nowadays is increasingly taken into account. The analysis in this part of the study is intended to be a contribution to the situation underlined by Wiesner-Hanks.

However, the lack of "prescriptive writing about men as men," a notion of Ruth Mazo Karras concerning the medieval sources, is a feature of Luther's writings as well. Accordingly, this chapter will discuss the norms and ideals concerning masculinity in Luther's thinking. If he deemed women to be valuable, yet secondary human beings, as has become clear already, how did he define men as primary? What part did male bodiliness play in his rhetoric? I will argue that on the basis of male bodiliness, Luther drew a picture of man's superiority but also sketched one desired way of being for all men. Accordingly, the chapter will discuss Luther's construction of being a husband and fatherhood as the proper model of the male way of being. I will extend the discussion by treating different models of men, both actual and imaginary. I will first discuss two real-life examples of masculinity advanced by Luther in his texts: that of Luther himself and that of Bernard of Clairvaux. Accordingly, I will review two groups of males, imaginary yet based on reality, namely, impotents and castrates. The chapter will argue that the very male

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1 Wiesner-Hanks 2002, 601.

bodies that justified the primacy of male gender could actually be unstable and fragile, even in Luther's theoretical discussions.

## 1. MAN AS THE PARAGON OF THE HUMAN RACE

### NORMATIVITY OF MAN AND MALE BODY: LUTHER'S STANCE TOWARD ADAM AND HIS SONS

First of all, how great are the gifts of the body! Form, strength, health, and the alertness of the senses, which in the male reach [their peak as he is] the more noble sex (*in masculo accedit nobilissimus sexus*). This enables him to carry out many things, both in public and private life, and many distinguished and proper deeds to which woman is a stranger (*a quibus mulier aliena est*).<sup>2</sup>

Luther described the male body in this manner in the *Fourteen Consolations* in 1520. *Fourteen Consolations* was written with one specific man in mind: Frederick the Wise. Luther composed the treatise after the elector fell gravely ill on a journey from Frankfurt to Torgau.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the treatise was aimed at offering Frederick encouragement in the midst of his illness.

The human body was—as Luther's idealized—strong, healthy and beautiful, and these qualities applied to both women and men alike. However, the male body was superior to the female body, as it allowed man to perform various duties both in public and private life. The word *nobilis* that Luther used in this context described the hierarchy of the sexes, and it credited man as the one with greater value and dignity. The man as the paragon of humankind is thus obvious in the passage. Even though there was indeed a bit of glorification in Luther's words, especially concerning the male body, his understanding resonates well with what Merry Wiesner-Hanks has concluded concerning the different societal expectations of women and men: "Motherhood was also women's only vocation, while fatherhood was not a vocation, but simply one of many tasks expected of godly men."<sup>4</sup>

Luther's bodily point of view becomes visible in *On Monastic Vows* as well. He compared the sexes and concluded: "[Men] have a firmer and more vigorous body than women and [they] die later."<sup>5</sup> Luther's notion was connected to his evaluation of the age at which men and women would need to be supported by the resources of churches. According to Luther, women could need support at sixty

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2 WA 6, 119. *Tessaradecas consolatoria pro laborantibus et oneratis*. Translation by Martin H. Bertram. Henceforth referred to as *Fourteen Consolations*.

3 Knaake 1888, 99.

4 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 78. The same notion is found in Wiesner-Hanks 2016, 9.

5 WA 8, 661. *On Monastic Vows*.

years of age, while this was not the case for men until they were seventy or eighty.<sup>6</sup> Modern scholars have made evaluations on the life expectancy in the Middle Ages. They vary from 50 to 69 years for men, depending on various factors, such as social status.<sup>7</sup> For women, the suggested mean age is only 48.<sup>8</sup> It is thus reasonable to assume that Luther's description of men living significantly longer than women was correct in principle, rather than being a mere rhetorical means to emphasize men's vitality. However, his statement may also refer to an understanding of the capability of men to take care of themselves better than women. This idea would have been based on Luther's view regarding the differences of the female and male bodies, especially the firmness of the male body.

Hence, men were superior to women from a bodily point of view. Luther thus reconstructed a gender hierarchy which fundamentally held that the man was strong and the woman weak—a structure that Heide Wunder calls “the dominant Christian anthropology” presented particularly by the humanists of the sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup> As has been noted in the previous chapter, not only the body but also the order of creation had a lot to do with the power relations between women and men in Luther's rhetoric. Indeed, it seems that Luther considered the fact that the man had been created first as the reason for the initial hierarchy:

See here, why God gave the order to Adam before He created Eve... The woman must not hear God's word without an intermediate, but to learn from Adam. So also before the fall the male person had the rule and authority.<sup>10</sup>

Luther thus justified the leading position of the man at home as well as in communal life by describing man's leadership already *per creatum* in the *Sermons on Genesis*.<sup>11</sup> As Luther put it, “God has ordered the male person to rule, teach, and preach.”<sup>12</sup> However, the man's duty to teach the woman emphasized not only his status as an authority, but also his responsibility to take care of the lesser being. Luther's demand for men to carry out their duty is explicated in the context of the fall: “God himself had spoken with Adam and given him the order that he should teach Eve.”<sup>13</sup>

In the patristic and medieval exegesis, the line between the order of creation and superiority had not been so clear-cut, however.<sup>14</sup> Some of Luther's predeces-

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6 WA 8, 661. *On Monastic Vows*.

7 Jonker 2003, 113; Griffin 2008, 577.

8 Griffin 2008, 577.

9 Wunder 2002, 21, 29.

10 WA 24, 71b–72b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 121b–122b.

11 Also Mattox has interpreted Luther in a similar way regarding this question. See Mattox 2003a, 53.

12 WA 24, 107b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 144a. Similar idea also in WA 14, 158b–159b.

13 WA 24, 83b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 144a.

14 Thompson 2009, 512.

sors had indeed deemed the order of creation as revealing the gender hierarchy, but several theological thinkers, from the early church to the late medieval world, such as Aurelius Ambrosius (c. 340–397) and Denis the Carthusian (1402–1471), considered the interpretation to be problematic. The creation of woman in a better place—namely, paradise—could in fact allude to her superiority, as they put it. Ambrosius and Denis, among other theologians, instead based their reading of the superiority of the male on the superiority of his virtues.<sup>15</sup>

Regardless of the original reason for male superiority for Luther, it seems that in his understanding the fall strengthened the position of the man as the ruling one. Man's power over woman was explicated, for instance, in the act of naming the woman Eve (*Heva*), which Luther described in the *Sermons*.<sup>16</sup> To emphasize the normative position of man, Luther used both Hebrew and German wordplay to describe the male and female. The man, *Jsch*, had the prerogative to name the woman *Jscha*. According to Luther's exegesis, *Jsch* referred to "a man among human beings," while *Jscha*, or *Mennin* in German, alluded to the fact that the woman had been taken from the male substance.<sup>17</sup> Luther did not hesitate to draw a parallel between the situation of the first human beings and the practice of his own days, when wives still got their names from their husbands.<sup>18</sup> Even though woman was a master over the created world—*ein herr uber alle* per creation in Luther's reading of Genesis, as has been discussed in Chapter III.1—the man had the greatest authority over her.

Luther's stance regarding male superiority and gender hierarchy was illuminated through a very traditional allegory of the sexes as well: "Adam is the image of Christ, the woman of his bride, the Christian church, which is named after him."<sup>19</sup> The same kind of nuptial imagery was also used by Luther in the *Freedom of a Christian*, where bride and groom appear as an allegory for the union of the human soul and Christ;<sup>20</sup> in *On Monastic Vows*, where he treated Christ as a groom and a human being's conscience as a bride;<sup>21</sup> and, for instance, in a marriage sermon in 1525 that noted straightforwardly that the man represented Christ and the woman the Church in marriage.<sup>22</sup>

15 Mattox 2003a, 41–42.

16 WA 24, 113b, 116b. (WA 14, 150a.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

17 WA 24, 79b–80b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 127a, 127b, 150a.

18 WA 24, 113b. (WA 14, 150a.) *Sermons on Genesis*.

19 WA 24, 116b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Somewhat similarly WA 14, 152a. Aside from Adam and Eve, Luther used the same imagery for Abraham and Sarah as well: "...the Christian church is the real Sarah, really free, having no one above her but her master Christ, who is her husband, has the right to her, that she has that which he has..." WA 24, 323b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 267a. For the allegory see, for instance, Elliott 2008, 16–33; Bynum 2012, 151.

20 WA 7, 54–55. *Freedom of a Christian*. See also Wiberg Pedersen 2017, 136–137.

21 WA 8, 608, 610. *On Monastic Vows*.

22 WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate*. For nuptial imagery, see also p. 13.

The nuptial imagery was present in biblical texts, both in the Old and the New Testaments, and used as an image by a myriad of Christian thinkers from the first centuries onward, especially by female and male mystics during the Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup> Luther adopted it to describe both the ecclesiastical and societal spheres, as well as gender relations, as his predecessors and contemporaries had also done.<sup>24</sup> Luther hence employed here the implicit interconnection of male-spirit-Christ and female-flesh-Church, which highlighted the normative position of the man in relation to the woman of lower status.<sup>25</sup> Although in the two latter contexts the image was not particularly connected to the power relations of women and men, the above-described interconnections with femininity and masculinity can indeed be seen as an implicit part of the discussion.

When it comes to the question of naming as an act of power-over, Mattox has maintained that the parallel of naming was not only an expression of man's superiority but also Luther's critique toward his male contemporaries who ignored their duty to work to provide for their families. These men—or "househusbands," as Mattox calls them—were not capable of affording "names" for their wives.<sup>26</sup> While it is indeed possible that Luther aimed to strengthen the masculine self-awareness of his male contemporaries, it is equally possible that he merely noted how the example of the first human beings was still applied in his days. I also find the concept of househusband slightly confusing. Although it possibly is merely a translation of the German equivalent *Hausvater*, it seems to contain other, unexplicated meanings as well—and, at any rate, Mattox does not clarify the concept.

If, then, the man was superior in body and in the gender hierarchy, as has been discussed, how did Luther explain and illuminate his role as regards the fall? As I have presented in Chapter III.1, in Luther's view there would have been the possibility to replace the woman, if it had only been her who fell into unbelief. Adam, on the other hand, could not be replaced, as he was the representative of humankind. Luther pondered in the *Sermons on Genesis*: "...the fall that Adam committed (*den Adam gethan hat*), must we all bemoan, complain and speak like him..."<sup>27</sup> The fall of Adam had profound consequences for human bodiliness, as he put it: "If Adam had not fallen, no man or woman would have been unfruitful."<sup>28</sup> In *On Married Life*, he explicated somewhat similarly: "...I say that flesh and blood,

23 Elliott 2008, 17–18; Kleinhans 2010, 128.

24 Mattox 2003a, 35, 37–39. See also e.g. Leppin 2014a, 53–54.

25 The same notion is made on a general level in Thompson 2009, 513: "...to the extent that the relationship of man and woman mirrors Christ and the church, the subordinate role of woman can scarcely be questioned."

26 Mattox 2003a, 53.

27 WA 24, 117b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Root of this statement in WA 14, 153b.

28 WA 24, 54b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 113b.

corrupted through Adam, is conceived and born in sin...”<sup>29</sup> Adam’s fall, by the same token, defined the relationship of women and men in the post-lapsarian world: “... there is no greater union than that of a man and a woman, and it would have remained that way if Adam had remained innocent. Now it is spoiled...”<sup>30</sup>

The view of man as the normative human being was, of course, in many ways built in in the Christian discourses from the first centuries to the Middle Ages, but it becomes particularly evident in the concept of the “Adamic fall.” The view of woman as an inferior creature had made it possible for some thinkers—for instance, Augustine—to deem Eve’s fall as unconscious and Adam’s as conscious.<sup>31</sup> Luther’s contemporaries commonly spoke of “the sin of Adam,”<sup>32</sup> and this was also the basis of Luther’s discussion. None of Luther’s references concerning the fall in terms of its effect on the state of the humankind *post lapsum* suggested the woman having a leading role. Thus, it is quite evident that for Luther, as for his predecessors and contemporaries, Adam’s fall sealed the downfall of all humankind.<sup>33</sup>

On the basis of her work on Luther’s sermons and *Lectures on Genesis*, however, Susan Karant-Nunn has argued that Luther regarded Eve as the main culprit behind the fall, and that “Adam’s allegedly more acute intellectual powers do not move the Reformer to assign greater blame to him.”<sup>34</sup> Luther indeed presented the man as the more intelligent person in the *Sermons on Genesis*. Should the serpent have asked him the same questions it asked woman, “he would have given it a whole other answer.”<sup>35</sup> Adam would have been better prepared for the *Anfechtung*, that is, the agonizing struggle,<sup>36</sup> than Eve, since God had given His orders directly

29 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 304. *On Married Life*.

30 WA 24, 78b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 126a. For Adam’s fall, see also WA 24, 18b, 70b. Indirectly, also in p. 51b.

31 Mattox 2003a, 38, 46.

32 Jean Calvin, for instance. See Thompson 1988, 142. The patriarchal premise of treating the fall is unfortunately taken as a given also in some of the recent Luther scholarship. For instance, in his doctoral thesis on Augustine’s and Luther’s concepts of original sin and the justification of the sinner, Jairzinho Lopes Pereira uses the concept and its derivatives without questioning. See Pereira 2012, for instance, 264–279. The same lack can be seen in Raunio 2010, 32–33. Furthermore, despite the distinguished analysis that Mickey Mattox has made not only of Luther’s but also of patristic and medieval interpretations of the male and female in Genesis 1–3, he has not treated the question of Adam’s fall explicitly. Mattox 2003a, 32–65.

33 This is explicit in WA 14, 133b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

34 Karant-Nunn 2008, 171. Concerning Luther’s views on the female and male in Paradise, Karant-Nunn has studied WA 14, 24, 42, and 45 in her article. As Kathleen M. Crowther has maintained, the tendency to blame Eve was not only in accordance with the theological tradition but it was cherished by other evangelicals as well. Crowther 2010, 47.

35 WA 24, 84b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 130a.

36 *Anfechtung* was a commonly used term not only by Luther, but by his contemporaries as well. It referred to spiritual temptation, as opposed to fleshly temptations. Either God or the devil could cause *Anfechtung* that resulted in a human being’s hopelessness of one’s life and

to him. According to Luther, the woman did not know any better and was a fool to believe the devil. On the other hand, Luther also spoke of man's fall by presenting him as no wiser than the woman: "...so he stands there, watches, and eats as well, willing to the malice of the devil's advice."<sup>37</sup> In Luther's view, the man allowed the woman to persuade him beyond any doubt.<sup>38</sup>

Although in Luther's view Eve was clearly the initiator in terms of the fall, the examinations made above point particularly to Adam's guilt. Although Luther did not use explicit language to blame the man, the conclusions he made regarding the man's fall do allude strongly to his responsibility. This is especially true since the man should have had, in Luther's opinion, God's word before him and both the ability and duty as Eve's superior to refrain from falling.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Luther did not give an admiring assessment of man's mental abilities in this context but claimed he should have been wiser, as he had been granted greater intelligence. One can ask, of course, how much Luther's aim to stress man and woman's equal tendency to unbelief—a theme that has been discussed already in Chapters II.2 and III.1—affected his rhetoric.

In spite of the woman's being the initiator, Luther ultimately considered the man's role as more crucial from the point of view of the whole of humankind, as the passages above suggest. Hence, Luther indeed recognized Adam's responsibility. The concept of the Adamic fall thus most probably derived from the idea of the male sex as the paragon of the human race, and deeming Adam's fall as the dictating one was only logical. This emphasizes well Luther's idea of the gender system: in the initial state, as afterwards, it was man's prerogative and responsibility to make decisions concerning the lives of both sexes.

Consequently, the man should have taught the woman—even before the fall—in order to have her understand the orders of God. Instead, Adam failed to take care of his responsibility, which had catastrophic consequences for humankind. The man's responsibility was thus closely tied with maintaining the gender order, and especially with maintaining public order. This accorded with the perspective of Luther's contemporaries as well. Luther's message to his male readers seems to have been that, as a rule, they needed to represent firmness and authority in relation to women. The parallel of the initial state and Luther's time explicates Luther's view of the power relations between women and men as a historical continuum, beginning in the initial state, and confirmed as a consequence of the Fall.

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salvation. See, for instance, Schneider 2010, 25–30; Koivisto 2012, 153; Rittgers 2012, esp. 122. Koivisto uses a longer term *Predestinationsanfechtung* for this kind of despair. Translation according to Rittgers 2014, 463.

37 WA 24, 90b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similar idea in WA 14, 133b.

38 WA 24, 72b–73b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 122b: "sed [Adam] seductus est a muliere."

39 WA 24, 90b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 134b.

## LIKE BODY, LIKE MALE—UNAVOIDABLE SEXUAL DRIVE

This section aims to decipher the connection between the male body, the proper masculine way of being, and Luther's religious-political rhetoric. It is assumed that the current historical situation had a similar impact on Luther's way of treating masculinity as it did on femininity: stressing the natural functions of the body and deriving the demands of a certain way of life from male bodiliness. The textual context in Luther's discussions is, once again, that of the monastery versus marriage.

In *On Monastic Vows*, Luther evaluated men in a rather polemical way:

...a young man or a man unto sixty years of age (*iuvenis aut vir usque ad sexagesimum annum*) can be equally weak, or even weaker, to remain continent, and more gravely burned with lust (*gravius uratur libidine*) than an adolescent (*adolescens*).<sup>40</sup>

He made this evaluation while discussing the impossibility of cloistered men to keep their sexual desire in control. Indeed, men could not prevent the inevitable from happening:

...I argue of the one who wants to fulfill the vow of celibacy and due to infirmity of the flesh (*per infirmitatem carnis*) cannot, and who frequently has tried, and nevertheless neither by fasting nor other devotions can [fulfill the vow], and is finally unwillingly compelled to, being conquered by flame of desire, experience dirty and impure seminal emissions (*fluxus immundos*) either when awake or in sleep, otherwise [leading a] blameless life.<sup>41</sup>

The masculinity of cloistered men was scrutinized by Luther in several contexts. In the *Exhortation* in 1523, Luther pondered if the vow of celibacy was actually a question of “whether a man can and should be a man, and whether the vow is valid by which he vows to be a man (*ob eyn man solle und moege eyn man seyn, und ob das geluebd gellte, da er verlobet eyn man zu seyn*).”<sup>42</sup> He brought the same theme up in *On Married Life* in the context of the prohibition of marriages of members of holy orders. Therein Luther wondered if tonsuring and sacred oil were so powerful that they made “a man not a man (*auß eym man keyn man macht*).”<sup>43</sup> Similar wording can also be found in the Sermons on Genesis from the same period: Luther considered the cloister vow as entailing a promise not to be a human being (*homo nolo esse*) at all.<sup>44</sup>

The theme of not being able to be a man comes up in yet another sense in *On Married Life*—namely, in the context of gendered behavior within marriage. Luther described female and male sexuality when evaluating the definition of policy of canon law on marriage matters and, more precisely, the eighteen impediments

40 WA 8, 661. *On Monastic Vows*.

41 WA 8, 630–631. *On Monastic Vows*.

42 WA 12, 243. *Exhortation*. In the treatise to the knights, the issue of the right kind of chastity became one of the key elements in Luther's discussion. See WA 12, 232, 234, 242. For instance, Gottfried Maron has analyzed Luther's idea of “right chastity” (*echte Keuschheit*) from the viewpoint of Luther's new approach to human sexuality. See Maron 1983, 277–278.

43 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 285. *On Married Life*.

44 WA 14, 112a. *Sermons on Genesis*.



to marriage.<sup>45</sup> According to the canonists, if a man engaged in sexual intercourse with his wife's sister or mother, his punishment was to stay married without any entitlement to demand marital sex from his wife. Hence, only the husband had the conjugal duty, which the wife could demand of him when she wished.<sup>46</sup> Luther insisted that this was a command to be "neither man nor woman (*sey keyn man noch weyb*)."<sup>47</sup> There was something unnatural for Luther in this situation, where the conjugal duty was fulfilled solely on the woman's initiative while the man's right to demand marital sex was prohibited.

Similar to the case of the stubborn wife discussed in the previous chapter, here also Luther dealt with reversed gender roles. Sexual desire belonged to the man's natural way of being while the woman's way of expressing her sexuality by being an initiator was not socially approvable—it did not belong to her proper way of being. Masculinity involved sexual desire and thus made man a man, whereas proper femininity lacked the same kind of desire for sexual intercourse. If a man was not allowed to be a man, that is, to fulfill his urges, a woman could not act like a woman either, that is, to be a passive object for the man's desire. A woman who filled the man's role in matters of sexuality could not be defined as a woman and vice versa. According to Luther, the man proved his manliness through activity in sexual intercourse, whereas the woman's proper way of being was to be obedient, assenting to act as a channel for the realization of male sexuality.

In the *Exhortation*, Luther explicated the societal consequences of the male sexual drive:

Then one cannot trust very much those living unmarried;<sup>48</sup> even married [men] have all they can do to keep from falling, although among them there is more justification for hope and confidence. There [among single men] there is neither hope nor confidence, but only constant fear.<sup>49</sup>

As Luther pointed out, the lack of self-control of single men produced suspicion and dislike toward them, and fear by other men regarding their wives and daughters.<sup>50</sup>

Male sexual desire was certainly a factor in the societies of the late medieval period. Bernd-Ulrich Hergemöller has maintained that sexual-ethical norms and values were key in medieval concepts of masculinity, and both ecclesiastical and secular authorities supervised the possible transgressions of rules.<sup>51</sup> Susan Ka-

45 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 280–287. *On Married Life*. The list was accepted into canon law from Summa Angelica by Angelo Carletti di Chivasso (1411–1495). The impediments are discussed also in WA 6, 553–558. *Babylonian Captivity*.

46 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 284. *On Married Life*.

47 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 284. *On Married Life*.

48 The American edition uses term "single men" of Luther's expression "*so on ehe leben*." See LW 45, 142.

49 WA 12, 233. *Exhortation*.

50 WA 12, 233. *Exhortation*.

51 Hergemöller 1998, 100–101.

rant-Nunn has further noted that single men were well known for their “sexual appetites.” Consequently, they were permitted to use women working in city brothels. By keeping an eye on the most suspicious men, the cities reduced the threat of respectable young women being raped or seduced.<sup>52</sup>

According to Luther as well, men were driven by their bodies, which drove them to engage in sexual relations, as can be read in the passages above. “Constant fear” was the suitable attitude toward single men, for they did not have a suitable channel to release the pressure of their sexual desire. Although one could make further gendered deductions about the fact that Luther spoke merely of men in the context of fornicators, it seems more probable that due to the audience of the text, the Teutonic Knights, he had no need to include a female point of view.

Luther emphasized his interpretation of young men’s raging sexuality by playing on the word *Bube* and its derivatives.<sup>53</sup> According to Luther, it was a common idea that as a youngster, a man was entitled to express himself sexually outside of marriage. He validated this by quoting a few proverbs of his time, such as “angel as a youngster, devil as an oldster.” In terms of contemporary thinking, as Luther presented it, it was assumed that one did not reach morality before adulthood.<sup>54</sup> In its primary meaning, *Bube* referred to “boy” without negative connotations as such. In the context of *On Married Life*, Luther used it to describe a young, reckless, and unstable man, a base fellow,<sup>55</sup> who neither settled down nor took responsibility for his actions.<sup>56</sup> In the discussion on the socially dangerous sexual behavior of young men, Luther joined in the late medieval discourses on adolescens, one of the phases of a man’s life, which was characterized by sexual activity and rowdiness. This particular age was defined somewhat differently in different medieval contexts, depending on the number of phases of life described, which could range from four to seven.<sup>57</sup>

If one was a *Bube*, said Luther, he also practiced *buberey* and was *bubisch*.<sup>58</sup> The usage of derivatives of the word *Bube* was somewhat common: for instance, John Bugenhagen (1485–1558) used the term *buberey* when citing immoral behavior.<sup>59</sup> *Buben* as a verb or as *buberey* were connected to *hurerey*, or fornication,

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52 Karant-Nunn 1982, 24; Lindberg 1996, 365. For a discussion concerning the elementary features during adolescence in medieval views, see also Karras 2003, 14–16.

53 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 300. *On Married Life*.

54 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 300. *On Married Life*.

55 Lambert & Brandt have translated *buben* as “base fellows.” Lambert & Brandt 1962, 149.

56 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 300. *On Married Life*. Similar use of the word in WA 14, 151b. *Sermons on Genesis*: “Hodie videmus quoque hoc, es wirt mancher bube ernehret, der widder ßorget noch borgett...”

57 Karras 2003, 12–14.

58 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 300. *On Married Life*.

59 Ozment 1983, 92.

in *On Married Life*.<sup>60</sup> In the *Exhortation* as well, Luther connected the concepts of base fellow and whore by talking about *huren und buben*.<sup>61</sup> Apparently “whores” did not belong to a category of professional prostitution but indicated, as a general term or as a nickname, a group of morally suspicious women. As Ruth Mazo Karras has stated, in the Late Middle Ages a prostitute, or “the figure of a whore,” had become an image of the universal lustful woman.<sup>62</sup> The word was also used as an insult.<sup>63</sup> The difference in how the sexes were treated is clear in these terms. When describing the stage of life of a man, *Bube* includes an aspect of maturing from boyhood to manhood, as well as the possibility of reforming one’s behavior; both of these aspects are not included in the term “whore.”

Luther was not the first to link adolescents and women together. For example, Jean Gerson (1363–1429) did likewise in his treatise *De probatione spirituum* in 1415.<sup>64</sup> Other philosophers and theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent (c. 1217–1293), and Duns Scotus (1266–1308), had also noted the difference between “a boy’s age and a woman’s sex.” For these male writers, women were defined by their sex despite their age or other factors, whereas men’s potential for growth was a given fact. Men were not hindered by their bodies in the same fashion as women.<sup>65</sup> A. J. Minnis maintains that according to their male perspective:

...boys are able to leave their deficiencies behind; with age and maturity their reasoning powers increase and their emotional instabilities decrease... Women, on the other hand, never grow out of their frailties. Trapped in bodies which are at once weak, impure and highly provocative sexually, hindered by weak minds and unstable emotions...<sup>66</sup>

One can ask, however, whether Luther regarded that a man was capable of maturing from his bubisch nature. To this end, one has to look at other connotations of *Bube* in his writings. A very harsh usage of the word can be found, for instance, in Luther’s answer to Jerome Emser (1477/8–1527) in 1521, entitled *Answer to the Hyperchristian, Hyperspiritual, and Hyperlearned Book by Goat Emser in Leipzig — Including some Thought Regarding his Companion, the Fool Murner*.<sup>67</sup> Emser was a theologian from Leipzig and a fierce opponent of Luther’s writings and the evange-

60 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 300. *On Married Life*.

61 WA 12, 237. *Exhortation*.

62 Karras 1999, 167, 170.

63 Rublack 2002, 3. As Marjorie Plummer has estimated, *Dirne* was an equivalent to the word *Hure* in the evangelical rhetoric. Plummer 2012, 176.

64 For Gerson, see Lochrie 1991, 1.

65 Minnis 1997, 125.

66 *Ibid.*, 125.

67 WA 7, 621–688. *Auff das ubirchristlich, ubirgeystlich und ubirkunstlich Buch Bocks Emszers zu Leypczick Antwortt D. M. L. Darynn auch Murnarrs seinß geselln gedacht wirt*. Henceforth referred to as *Answer to Emser*. For a short introduction to Luther’s way to use language in this particular writing, see Cole 2013, 312–313. For Emser’s criticism toward Luther, see Edwards 1994, 118–123, 150–154, 160.

lical movement.<sup>68</sup> In the text, Luther called Emser “an untruthful base fellow (*eynen lügenhaften buben*),”<sup>69</sup> and he also criticized the pope as “a heretic and base fellow (*ein ketzer und bube*).”<sup>70</sup> He thus used the term *Bube* pejoratively for his male opponents,<sup>71</sup> whom he judged to be liars, heretics, and devils.<sup>72</sup> A third kind of usage of the word is evident in a sermon from August 1522.<sup>73</sup> Discussing the relationship between faith and works, Luther noted: “When I realize that I am a sinner, the result of it is that I say: Oh God I am a base fellow (*O Got ich bin ein bube*).”<sup>74</sup> In the last example, he used the concept neither pejoratively nor as a reference to adolescence, but as a term describing human nature as fallen and sinful in general. The concept does not, of course, lose its gendered tone in the third use either.

The difference between the uses of the word in Luther’s language implies that in terms of raging sexual expression, immaturity was tied to young men, yet not only to them. As far as Luther was concerned, young men’s bodies dictated primarily their way of acting, often in an undesired direction. However, his various uses of the word *Bube* would suggest that one could be a base fellow for one’s whole life. The demands of the male body were not dependent on one’s age *per se*, as Luther clearly pointed out in *On Monastic Vows*, quoted right at the beginning of this section. The quotation from the *Exhortation*, where Luther noted that those men who lived unmarried (*so on ehe leben*) were in constant threat of giving in to their sexual lust, does not include any age-specific expression either. Thus, it was a great struggle for all men, regardless of their marital status, age, or other factors, not to be ruled by their bodily urges. To put it more broadly, the simultaneity of lust and the need to struggle with oneself was present in the male way of being.

However, Luther’s texts also imply that the male body worked according to its nature despite the efforts of the man to act otherwise. Since struggle was of no use, only one conclusion could be made. This becomes evident in Luther’s letter to Nicholas Gerbel, written during the same period as *On Monastic Vows*, where Luther congratulated him for his recent entry into matrimony: “You lucky [man], who hast conquered that impure celibacy, continuous burning sensations and damnable dirty flows (*fluxibus*), through honorable marriage!”<sup>75</sup> In the *Exhortation*, Luther wondered which was closer to God’s mercy—the one who kept a concubine (*der eyn huerlin hat*) or the one who got married.<sup>76</sup>

68 Edwards 1994, 36; Cole 2013, 312.

69 WA 7, 625. *Answer to Emser*.

70 WA 7, 645. *Answer to Emser*.

71 This can clearly be seen in Luther’s reference to his opponents in WA 7, 647. *Answer to Emser*.

72 For the latter, see WA 7, 648. *Answer to Emser*.

73 WA 10<sup>III</sup>, 293–303. Sermon on 11th Sunday After Trinity Sunday (August 31, 1522).

74 WA 10<sup>III</sup>, 296. Sermon on 11th Sunday After Trinity Sunday.

75 WA BR 2, no. 435, 397, 52–53. To Nicholas Gerbel (November 1, 1521).

76 WA 12, 238. *Exhortation*.

As Ruth Mazo Karras has noted, struggle was tied to medieval conceptions of masculinity.<sup>77</sup> Sexual activity and even sexual aggressiveness were understood as masculine features, but in parallel, the ability to control one's sexual desire was equally expected of men.<sup>78</sup> In terms of sexuality, therefore, the medieval idea of masculinity consisted of both virility and self-control. Struggle, as Karras continues, was especially important in the case of both regular and secular clergy. Monks were no different from other men, as they felt sexual desire as well, yet the distinction from other men was made by emphasizing the struggle in which the monks were driven. The "clerical model of masculinity" contained not only the ideal of the struggle of the individual, but it also required support from God: divine assistance, as Karras puts it.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the theoretical idea of struggle, late medieval practices involving secular clergy admitted their needs. Thus, a pastor was allowed to have a concubine, a spouse with whom he lived in a marriage-like relationship that usually produced offspring as well. Concubinage<sup>80</sup> was a common way of life among secular clergy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as the need for the practice had increased over time. The culmination of the issue had been the Second Lateran Council of 1139, which declared that ordination absolutely prevented marriage. Thereafter, the wives of priests were spoken of as concubines or prostitutes, whilst the relationships were judged to involve fornication.<sup>81</sup> In spite of the prohibition of the councils, however, concubinage was in fact a stable part of the ecclesiastical system with prescribed fines and annual penitential fees (*hurenzinss*), which clergy needed to pay to the bishop.<sup>82</sup> Nor was concubinage merely a feature of the ecclesiastical system. As late as 1514, the Fifth Lateran Council disallowed concubinage among the laity. Both ecclesiastical and secular courts systematically convicted people found guilty of concubinage, giving fines or punishments of public penitential acts. Such systematic measures only reduced concubinage gradually, however.<sup>83</sup>

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77 Karras 2008a, 53–56.

78 Roper 1989, 145; Karras 2008a, 56; Bynum 2012, 151, 156.

79 Karras 2008a, 57, 64, 66–67.

80 Concubinage is a translation of the Latin word *concubinatus*, which derives from *concupitus* (sexual intercourse). Legal concubinage has ancient origins in the Roman world and Roman law. In the Early Middle Ages it was practiced *inter alia* among Germanic peoples. See Wertheimer 2006, 385–391.

81 Ozment 1983, 5; Brundage 1987, 297. For in-depth discussions of concubinage in Germany, see Plummer 2012, 11–50; 167–209. Clerical concubines are also discussed in Thibodeaux 2015, *passim*. Wertheimer has explicitly pointed out the continuum of the hardening injunctions of clerical marriage, which shows that in spite of being a culmination point, the statement of the Second Lateran Council was not the first of its kind. Wertheimer 2006, 392–393.

82 Ozment 1983, 5; Stjerna 2009, 35; Plummer 2012, 23–24, 171–172.

83 Brundage 1987, 514–516; Roper 1989, 106. As Harrington has noted, concubinage was punished in a similar vein as adultery and prostitution. Harrington 2005, 123.

Marjorie Plummer has noted that evangelical authors were generally persuading the uncertain to marry and targeting their rhetoric to convince communities to accept the marriages of monks and priests. The aim of the polemicists was increasingly to stress the needs of the human body by appealing to sexual desire, which was, according to them, an unavoidable part of every human being.<sup>84</sup> For instance, Luther's contemporary Urban Rhegius (1489–1541), who had been an evangelical preacher in Augsburg since 1520, claimed that "every monk is a whorer, either in secret or in public."<sup>85</sup> The poet Hans Sachs (1494–1576) likewise maintained that "if you abstain from natural works, you must sully yourselves in other ways."<sup>86</sup> Thus, as can be seen also from Luther's texts, the argument led to an insight that "moral and social expectations were to be the same for clergy and laity."<sup>87</sup> Heinrich Boehmer already brought the same ideal forward in his biography of Luther in 1951, but he viewed it as gender-inclusive: there was no difference between the morals of ordinary people and that of monks. Instead, he argued, "the ideal is the same for all people."<sup>88</sup>

By analyzing *Hausväter* literature and pamphlets on the marriage of Protestant preachers, Scott Hendrix has observed that among advocates of the evangelical movement there was an increasing tendency to consider priests and monks, who lived under the vow of celibacy without the gift of chastity, as rejecting their maleness. They were "the men who refused to be men"<sup>89</sup>—a theme Luther also discussed, as has been noted in the beginning of this section. For example, Luther's contemporary Thomas Stör concluded in 1524: "A priest is as much a man, a work and creation of God... If one forbids marriage for the priests, then a man is not a man."<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, many of Luther's contemporaries used biblical examples of Abraham and Jacob, both being married priests, as justification for the "universal natural impulse of sexuality."<sup>91</sup> Struggle was no longer regarded as a virtue for clerics.

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84 Plummer 2012, 92, 110. Luther expressed this explicitly, for instance, in *On Monastic Vows*: "At sine concupiscentia neque virgo neque coelebs est in hac vita." WA 8, 585.

85 Cited in Roper 1989, 105. Originally from the treatise *Ernstliche erbietung der Euangelische Prediger* (1524).

86 Cited in Plummer 2012, 138–139. Originally from the treatise *Eyn gesprech von den Scheinwercken der Gaystlichen* (1524).

87 Plummer 2012, 119. See also Karant-Nunn 2012a, 4.

88 Boehmer 1951, 254. However, as Boehmer speaks not of the morals of the cloistered in general but the morals of monks particularly, it seems probable that "all people" in his language rather refers mostly to men and does not take the question of gender into account.

89 Hendrix 2008, 77.

90 *Der Ehelich standt* 1524. Cited in Plummer 2012, 110.

91 Plummer 2012, 110. The idea of Abraham as a married priest can be found in Luther, although indirectly, in WA 24, esp. 321b–330b. (WA 14, 113a.) For a discussion of Abraham as a model example of faith in Luther's view, see Asendorf 1988, 373–376.

The difference between Luther's view and the medieval views on masculinity concerning the struggle against lust lay especially in the agency of God. In the *Exhortation*, for instance, Luther pointed out that God could assist a man to keep his chastity (*keuscheyt*) without swearing any oath whatsoever, that is, if he was among those who had received God's special grace of being content.<sup>92</sup> In that case, however, it seems that in Luther's rhetoric chastity was rather a state of sexual anesthesia, not a state of struggle *per se*.

Yet chastity could be a state of struggle as well, as Luther's notion, cited formerly, seems to suggest: he noted that even married men "have all they can do to keep from falling."<sup>93</sup> In Luther's view, the struggle of clerics in particular was not assisted by God, as has become clear already in my previous discussions, since the struggle of the unmarried man was against Him and His commands. This becomes evident, for instance, in *On Monastic Vows*, quoted at the beginning of this section, which explicated the impossibility for the great majority of people to struggle against sexual desire.

Luther thus participated in the contemporary rhetoric that drew the masculinity of laypeople and the clergy closer to each other, even presenting it as similar. The rhetorical motivation of the *Exhortation* and *On Monastic Vows* in particular had a clear influence on Luther's language in that regard. The aim of the text addressed to the Knights, as Luther explicated it, was to support them to make the decision to marry.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, the aim of *On Monastic Vows* was to convince those who were looking to leave the cloister about the validity of that decision. Luther insisted that especially the Knights be role models for other men in a historical situation full of debate about clerical celibacy and marriage. Furthermore, the understanding of a universal representation of masculinity became a means to justify the social reforms. The universal premise to be a man, lacking the gift of true chastity, was thus to express oneself sexually; this was to happen in the proper environment for sexual expression, namely, in matrimony. The similar masculinity of all groups of males—as Luther and his colleagues presented it in relation to sexuality and sexual expression—required the same kind of societal arrangements.

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92 WA 12, 242. *Exhortation*.

93 The usage of a twofold meaning of chastity—as sexual anesthesia and as struggle—had been common throughout the Middle Ages. See Karras 2008a, 63.

94 WA 12, 232–233. *Exhortation*.

## HAUSVATER AS THE EMBODIMENT OF THE PROPER WAY OF BEING

If the male body and its urges and experiences were the same for all men, so should be the practical arrangements that were made due to them, as Luther put it. He regarded that working and ruling belonged to man's duties already per creation—although without tiredness and misfortune.<sup>95</sup> The fall, however, emphasized Adam's responsibility to take care of the family and the community, as he was punished *an der erbeyt*.<sup>96</sup> This accentuated duty with its burdens was the primary task of the man in the post-lapsarian world, although, as Luther noted, the man's punishment was the lightest, compared to that of the woman and the serpent.<sup>97</sup> The fall emphasized the bodiliness of the man through the demand to work by the sweat of one's brow, however. As women felt pain in their bodies in pregnancy and labor, so did men in their everyday work.

Luther's claim of the simultaneous authority and responsibility of the man became embodied in the ideal of the *Hausvater*. In the treatise *On Married Life*, he saw the question of taking care of the family as a juxtaposition of one's natural reason (*die naturliche vernunft*) and Christian faith (*der Christlich glawbe*). Reason, which Luther described also as a clever harlot (*die kluge hure*), despised man's duties while faith recognized his responsibilities in the society.<sup>98</sup> Hence, Luther described the juxtaposition with masculine and feminine terms: the masculine one (*der Christlich glawbe*) was the desired way to understand man's duties, while the feminine ones (*die naturliche vernunft* and *die kluge hure*) represented false ways of seeing them.

The juxtaposition of reason and faith was more broadly a part of the discussion concerning philosophical and theological ways of understanding the human being, and as such it was closely tied to questions of free will and justification, for instance. Nonetheless, I consider the matter only from the viewpoint of representing masculinity. I will quote Luther's words on both reason and faith, for this gives not only a valid picture of Luther's rhetoric but also offers quite a lively illumination of family life, taking Luther's own position into account. Praise of the proper way to represent one's manliness is given in Luther's imaginary monologue of a father of Christian faith:

...and [the man] says: "O God, as I am certain that you have created me as a man and from my body begotten this child, so I also know that it pleases you the best. And you know that I am not worthy to rock this baby or to wash its diapers, or to take care of it or its mother. How have I come to worthiness and the distinction of becoming certain that I'm serving your creatures and your most lovely will? O, how gladly will I do so, though

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95 WA 24, 63b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similar idea in WA 14, 142b.

96 WA 24, 108b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 141a.

97 WA 24, 107–108b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similar idea in WA 14, 141b, 145b.

98 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 295. *On Married Life*.



they [the duties] were even pettier and despised. Now neither frost nor heat, neither efforts nor labor chagrin me, for I'm certain that it thus pleases you."<sup>99</sup>

An improper way of responding to the expectations concerning man's life arises from one's reason:

...and [natural reason] says: "Alas, should I rock the baby, wash its diapers, make its bed, smell its stench, stay up the night, take care of it when it cries, heal its rashes and poxes, thereafter care for my wife, provide for her, labor, worry here and there, do this and that, endure this and that, and whatever else of bitterness and difficulty married life involves? No, I will not be imprisoned like that. ... It is better to remain free and lead a calm life."<sup>100</sup>

He continued by deconstructing the stigma given to a devoted father:

Now tell me, when a man goes ahead and washes diapers or does something of a despicable kind, and someone sees him and considers him ridiculous and effeminate (*frawen man*), although he does [the tasks] in the spirit just described and in Christian faith, say my dear, who finer scoffs at the other?<sup>101</sup>

Luther offered a similar attitude toward man's responsibilities in both the *Exhortation* and in the *Sermons on Genesis*, in addition to *On Married Life*.<sup>102</sup>

In the *Exhortation*, Luther expressed the same kind of illumination of man's tasks by putting God and Scripture as opposites of the pope and his words. Luther considered ruling and supporting one's family "by the sweat of the face," bearing "much misfortune and unhappiness," as desirable burdens for a man. This was manly behavior required by God and Scripture—quite the contrary to the pope and his demands.<sup>103</sup> He presented a comparable idea of an honorable male in his sermon *Marital Estate* in 1525: "...if you want to be a god-fearing husband and to wander in God's path, support yourself with the work of your hands, and if you do that, God's blessing will come to you..."<sup>104</sup> The ideal of an honorable male that he offered for husbands was an ideal targeted at all men: Luther noted that every occupation, including the preacher, prince, nobleman, and mayor, could (and probably should) be practiced with the sweat of the face and the maintenance of one's household in mind.<sup>105</sup> Being a husband was an ideal that Luther offered to every male, regardless of his occupation, social status, and so forth. Furthermore, working to support one's family made man a man—and thereby he fulfilled his appropriate gendered way of being.

99 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 296. *On Married Life*.

100 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 295. *On Married Life*.

101 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 296. *On Married Life*.

102 See WA 12, 240. *Exhortation*; WA 24, 103b. *Sermons on Genesis*.

103 WA 12, 240–241. *Exhortation*.

104 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 22–23. *Marital Estate*.

105 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 23. *Marital Estate*. See also p. 22: "Ist einer ein Ackerman oder handwercker, Schneider oder schuster..."

Moreover, in *On Married Life* Luther expressed derision of men who wanted to be “lazy, greedy rascals who do not need to work.” Men who refused to be responsible and thus fulfill their role in the society were, according to him, merely interested in “rich, beautiful, pious, and kind” women as wives.<sup>106</sup> With these depictions of male responsibilities, Luther can be interpreted as having joined the growing genre of *Hausväter* literature, which described the ideals of being a husband and fatherhood.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, both literature and common practice held that in addition to his given position of dominion, the *Hausvater* had heavy responsibilities regarding his family and household.<sup>108</sup>

Several scholars have noted Luther’s way of intensifying his comments by presenting two opposite stands of the same subject. Reflecting the insights of Joseph Lortz, Arffman points out that the use of paradoxical opposites was a form of Luther’s creative expression.<sup>109</sup> On the basis of her reading of the treatise *On Monastic Vows*, Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen has, on her part, remarked: “Together with his law-gospel scheme, these operational opposites, introduced in the preceding years and which he never again gave up, constitute the backbone of his Christian belief and reformation programme...”<sup>110</sup> Also L’ubomír Batka has discussed the same theme by naming it as antithetical pairs that contain sharp contrast.<sup>111</sup> It seems obvious that the university mode of disputations had influenced Luther’s way of formulating his ideas, as he was trained in the scholastic tradition of *disputatio*, consisting of the dialogue between *argumentum* and *respondeo*.<sup>112</sup> Usage of these opposites was such an integral part of Luther’s language that it seems that it was not only a matter of rhetoric but something that defined his thinking as a whole.

Reason and the pope, cited in quotes above, referred to contempt of the man’s role as a husband and father, as well as to favoring of monasticism. According to Luther, people—most probably other men—who did not understand the God-given mission of a *Hausvater* were foolish enough to judge his role as ridiculous. The ground for others’ joking was suspicion of effeminacy: the tasks that Luther referred to belonged to the woman’s sphere, and thus they were despicable

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106 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 302. *On Married Life*.

107 For *Hausväter* literature, see Hendrix 2008, esp. 71. For a discussion of *Hausväter*, see also Schmidt 1998, 213–236.

108 See, e.g., van Dülmen 2005, 41.

109 Arffman 1993, 34, 62. Lortz has noted that Luther’s theology exists in paradoxes. See Lortz 1962, 152–154.

110 Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 230.

111 Batka 2014, 246.

112 See, e.g., Lindberg 1996, 57–58; Vind 2014, 473.

from man's standpoint.<sup>113</sup> As Susan Karant-Nunn has noted, Luther used the term "effeminate," as did his contemporaries, to refer to weakness and inferiority.<sup>114</sup>

In the tradition of monastic management, under which Luther lived for over fifteen years, there was a habit of recruiting members of a different status to do the menial tasks of the monastery. These could either be lay brothers or, in the case of double monasteries, female devotees; manual labor could be demanded of monks as well.<sup>115</sup> Considering the impact of Luther's monastic background, it is possible that the issue of menial tasks was not for him primarily a gendered question; in fact, it could have been more related to social class. However, a more accurate interpretation would appear to be that Luther was practicing *ad absurdum* rhetoric in this context (i.e., rhetoric which signifies deduction to the impossible). In this way, he was presenting an evangelical *Hausvater* who appeared to the world as a fool but to God as a true Christian. Feminine tasks were thus a method of constructing rhetoric that went to extremes.

Luther may also have been engaging in a phenomenon that grew during the Late Middle Ages, that is, the mothering of men. Sheingorn argues that mothering was increasingly a socially constructed occurrence in medieval Europe, and as such it was available to, and often adopted by, men. A motherer, either a man or a woman, partook in the maternal practices defined by the surrounding culture without being a biological mother him or herself.<sup>116</sup> Men engaging in mothering can be seen, for instance, in popular cradle play texts, where Joseph was depicted doing feminine tasks.<sup>117</sup>

The key issue from Luther's point of view was the spirit in which the duties were performed, not the works themselves. Neither was this a pragmatic manifest of gender equality in the tasks of the household, but a rhetorical way of emphasizing humbleness and a certain kind of self-sacrifice on the part of a man. If the father washed diapers in Christian faith, the duty was favorable in God's eyes, and the ones scoffing him were the biggest fools on earth (*der groesten narrn auff erden*) to see only the task and not the faith behind it.<sup>118</sup> In addition, it seems that the address of man's reason, which the rascals reflected in their behavior as well, was part of Luther's criticism toward a philosophical understanding of the human being with an emphasis on human reason, of which Aristotle was a model example in medieval philosophical discourse. The emphasis on faith, on the other hand, seems to have stressed a theological understanding of the human being by describing the right kind of attitude a man should have in regard to his responsibilities.

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113 Gerle has advanced the same notion. See Gerle 2015, 148–149.

114 Karant-Nunn 2008, 174.

115 Lawrence 1996, 163, 175, 223, 225.

116 Parsons & Wheeler, x; Sheingorn 1996, 77.

117 Hale 1996, 104–106.

118 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 297. *On Married Life*.

According to Merry Wiesner-Hanks, the most important yet commonly dismissed aspect of this passage is precisely the question about the right kind of faith.<sup>119</sup> Thus, this text passage resembles Luther's formulations of what has been called his *theologia crucis* in modern research, which, by and large, is based on the idea that "reason does not sustain that which faith alone maintains," as well the differentiation of theology of the cross from theology of glory.<sup>120</sup>

In other words, Luther's aim was not to raise the value of the duties of household as such but to stress the right kind of frame of mind. The duties remained contemptible in Luther's language as they belonged primarily to women, or to lower-class males, but it was acceptable for a man to participate in them with the right spirit. In that context, effeminacy was not a derisive word. In fact, due to his belief, it seems that a father doing a mother's tasks could not be called effeminate at all, rather a devoted father. In addition, although Luther considered the worries and obligations of a *Hausvater* to be a burden, the portrayal of faith revealed the significance of that very burden.

This understanding of proper masculinity correlates with Heinrich Schmidt's notion that, according to several scholars, the role of a *Hausvater* was not only about the right of the man to possess such a status, but rather it involved a complex set of man's duties and responsibilities. One of the meanings of being a *Hausvater* was to serve a higher goal by accepting man's proper role,<sup>121</sup> which Luther described as the speech of faith, quoted above. According to him, taking care of a family and accepting the burdens that the role of the head of the family brought with it were the duties that defined proper masculinity. In Luther's rhetoric, therefore, petty and despised duties paradoxically stressed the honor and dignity of a man. Furthermore, by deciphering the gender system of his day and by dramatizing the common opinion of fatherhood, Luther aimed to crystallize his own position. Being a husband and father as proper male ways of being were laid out and known by God—and Luther himself, being one who really understood His will.

One of those responsibilities was indeed to rule the family reasonably. When presenting a picture of a married couple as one flesh in the sermon *Marital Estate*, Luther advised men in the following way:

So man, too, should not govern women (*die Weiber regieren*) with big batons, bullying, or a bear knife, but with friendly words and gestures and with all kindness (*sanfftmuth*), so that they will not become frightful, as Saint Peter says in chapter three,<sup>122</sup> and [so that they will not] be

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119 Wiesner-Hanks 2016, 8.

120 For theology of the cross, see, e.g., Juntunen 2001; Rittgers 2012, 111–124; Westhelle 2014, here p. 157.

121 Schmidt 1998, 218.

122 I Peter 3:6: "just as Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters by doing good and by not letting anything terrify you."

startled so that then they do not know what to do. That is why man has to govern women with understanding (*vernunft*) and not with madness (*unvernunft*) and give the feminine sex its honor as the weaker vessel...<sup>123</sup>

In other words, the ideal husband was understanding, kind, and a friendly head of the household. He did not misuse his authoritative position but took his responsibilities seriously. Nonetheless, he could represent these qualities only in his position to “govern” his wife, that is, in his given position as the authority and normative person.

The analysis of the burdens of being a father is further supported by Luther’s deciphering of the man’s role in *On Married Life*, namely, as husbands viewing their occupation as God’s will: “...no wife would be so ugly, so wicked, so mischievous, so poor, [and] so sick that they [the husbands] would not find heart’s joy [in their estate].”<sup>124</sup> Female malice could not only be tolerated but even regarded as a blessing by their husbands:

And when they [husbands] see that it [marriage] is the good pleasure of their beloved God, they can have peace in misery, joy in the midst of reluctance, and delight in the midst of agony, as the martyrs have in suffering (*wie die Merterer ym leyden, haben*).<sup>125</sup>

The martyrdom of a *Hausvater* was thus a parallel to the martyrdom of women in labor, discussed in Chapter III.2, although in the context of male suffering martyrs were explicitly mentioned by Luther, unlike in terms of feminine suffering. In addition, the martyrdom of the man had to do with all the aspects of marital life, whereas in the case of women the act of giving birth most resembled martyrdom in Luther’s language.

In spite of the various examples that Luther gave concerning the petty responsibilities and burdens that being a husband and fatherhood involved, the ideal father was for him the representative of his whole household and held the highest authority. Parental authority, for example, was explicated by Luther merely as paternal authority. In *On Married Life*, Luther defined the father as the authoritative parent: “a child should be subordinate and obedient to its father (*seym vatter*) ... thereby through *parental* authority and obedience (*durch der elltern gewalt und gehorsam*)...”<sup>126</sup> In the *Sermons on Genesis*, Luther depicted Adam as the teacher of the gospel of the promised seed, Christ.<sup>127</sup> In this context, Luther also emphasized man’s pastoral role as the teacher of his children in matters of service and sacrifice.<sup>128</sup> Consequently, the man was the representative of both sexes in questions

123 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate*. Luther’s attention toward husbands’ conduct is also noted briefly in this quotation in Wiesner-Hanks 2012.

124 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 295. *On Married Life*.

125 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 295. *On Married Life*.

126 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 286. *On Married Life*. Italics mine.

127 WA 24, 125b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similarly WA 14, 158b–159b.

128 WA 24, 126b. *Sermons on Genesis*. Similar idea in WA 14, 159b.

concerning parental authority, and especially in terms of pastoral authority, as the passages from the Sermons prove.

When Luther's views, discussed in this section, are examined as religious-political statements, they seem to refer specifically to the opposition between being a father and being a devoted religious person. According to Luther's interpretation of the address of reason, quoted formerly, it was "better to remain free and lead a calm life"—a view which he despised, as seen in the address of faith. Accepting the responsibility which came along with superiority necessitated a step from boyhood to manhood by means of marriage and fatherhood. Indeed, already in *On Monastic Vows* Luther explicitly stated that monks were "boys their whole life."<sup>129</sup>

Marriage was, by and large, deemed as the step from boyhood to manhood in Luther's time.<sup>130</sup> As Ruth Mazo Karras has noted, however, most important when regarding men as "fully adult or fully masculine" during the medieval era was not the significance of marriage as such, but the significance of fatherhood.<sup>131</sup> According to her:

Until a man did so [fathered legitimate children], he had not claimed his place in the genealogical chain. Genealogy held more importance in some social setting than in others, but even without property or title to pass on, fatherhood formed a central component of the medieval ideology of manhood.<sup>132</sup>

The celibates, on the contrary, did not have the possibility to have legitimate offspring. Accordingly, in their path to manhood they could not move forward from the status of a child.<sup>133</sup>

There was a definite difference between late medieval views and those of Luther and his contemporaries, however. During the first half of the 1520s, the evangelical polemicists began to demand a similar path of life for every man, including monks and priests.<sup>134</sup> To put it another way, the view that certain phases of man's life were universal for all men, not only for a specific group of them, began to gain more and more ground. Luther was amongst the first to explicate this claim.

However, exceptions existed as well. Luther's elector Frederick the Wise, for example, was not married but kept a concubine—yet Luther never accused him of malpractice.<sup>135</sup> It seems that Frederick may have had troubles in finding a suitable spouse to marry.<sup>136</sup> In addition, concubinage was rather common among the up-

129 WA 8, 334. *On Monastic Vows*.

130 Roper 1989, 135–136; Wunder 2002, 34.

131 Karras 2003, 17.

132 Karras 2003, 16.

133 Karras 2003, 17.

134 Schmidt 1998, 214–216; Plummer 2012, 51–129.

135 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 5. There seems to be hardly any research concerning Frederick the Wise's concubine. Karant-Nunn mentions Ludolphy 2006 and Ritschel 2006.

136 Ludolphy 2006, 47–58, esp. noted in p. 58.

per classes, and concubines were “status symbols and means of acquiring heirs in lieu of or in addition to wedlock,” as Mia Korpiola has maintained.<sup>137</sup> Concubinage is indeed one of the characteristics of late medieval societies that tell of the aristocracy’s different rights in comparison with the lower classes.<sup>138</sup> Contrary to dismissing Frederick’s concubinage, Luther alluded to the concubinage of Archbishop Albert of Mainz (1490–1545) in a letter written to him in December 1521. Luther noted that the bishops should give up their concubines (*die Bischöffe zuvor ihre Hurn von sich trieben*),<sup>139</sup> thereby referring specifically to Albert’s concubine.<sup>140</sup>

It thus seems that from Luther’s viewpoint, in practice sexual ethics were negotiable. Even though the sexual drive itself was probably not questioned in the case of either of the men, their arrangements were treated differently. Frederick was favorable toward Luther and the evangelicals’ aims while Albert was not,<sup>141</sup> and this was undoubtedly one of the reasons for Luther’s differing stance toward their concubinage. In addition, Luther’s pastoral approach toward Frederick—which becomes apparent in *Fourteen Consolations*, for example, which was discussed in the previous section—affected his way of reacting (or more precisely, not reacting) on Frederick’s case. For these reasons at least, Luther could treat Frederick as an exception to the rule, unlike Albert, who opposed him. Thus, Luther’s (and his coworkers’) overall idea of “sex for all but only within marriage”<sup>142</sup> did not apply to everyone in practice.

To sum up this section, one can say that in the post-lapsarian world, male bodiliness had become a lived bodiliness in a very practical sense in Luther’s rhetoric. The lived bodiliness of a man was also tied to the issue of social demands, as has been discussed. Luther held a very similar normative definition of policy regarding different groups of males: one should acquire the responsible position of *Hausvater*. However, surpassing the limits that one’s gender created—that is, stepping to the sphere of the other sex—was permissible in the case of a father who had faith. As such, this idea resembles the one Luther presented in the case of women he was corresponding with, discussed in Chapter III.3: actions done in evangelical faith justified one to break the gender roles.

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137 Korpiola 2006, 524. See also Karras 2008b, 120.

138 For aristocracy in the Late Middle Ages, see, e.g., Kleinschmidt 2008, 115–116.

139 WA BR 2, no. 442, 408, 93. To Archbishop Albert of Mainz (December 1, 1521).

140 Plummer 2012, 65.

141 In addition to Luther’s letter to Albert, see, e.g., Plummer 2012, 57–59, 65, *et passim*; Met-huen 2014, 10–11. In Daniel 2014, 340, Albert is called Luther’s “old foe.”

142 The heading in Arffman 2006.

## 2. UNSTABLE MALE BODIES: REDEFINING IDEALS THROUGH DEPICTIONS OF MALE SEXUALITY

### EXAMPLES OF LUTHER AND BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

How about Luther himself, then? His depiction of the bodily needs that were applicable to all men would suggest that he too suffered the demands of his body.<sup>143</sup> Or could it be that he counted himself among those who had received the special grace of continence from God? This section shall discuss these questions and explore the way in which Luther constructed his own masculinity in the period under review.

Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), whom Luther frequently cited in theological matters, will be discussed in comparison with Luther. There is already a great deal of modern scholarship concerning the relationship between the theologies of Bernard and Luther, as well as multiple answers to the question whether Luther represented continuity or discontinuity in comparison with Bernard, or whether the truth lies somewhere in between.<sup>144</sup> For example, Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen has credibly examined earlier research—especially that of Bernhard Lohse—and pointed out that the pair’s theological views were rather close to each other. According to her, the crux of the differences was that “[s]ocial and cultural developments since the 12<sup>th</sup> century called for a new approach to the living out of faith.”<sup>145</sup> In this chapter I will not discuss how Luther esteemed Bernard as a theologian, but how he esteemed him as a representative of his sex. My hypothesis is that by comparing Luther’s view of himself and of Bernard, one will get a more diverse picture of what it meant to be a man than seen in the previous chapter.

Luther brought up the theme of his own bodiliness, although indirectly, in a letter to Wenzel Linck (1483–1547) in December 1521. Linck had become a doctor of theology in 1511 and was a close associate of Luther. Since 1520, Linck had also been the vicar-general of the strict Augustinians.<sup>146</sup> Luther wrote to Linck from Wartburg Castle, where he had been hiding for over seven months. Linck was planning to arrange a meeting of the Augustinians on his behalf in January 1522 to discuss the question of the cloister vows.<sup>147</sup> Probably as many as fifteen brothers had left the Augustinian cloister of Wittenberg already by the end of November 1521,<sup>148</sup> and by the time of Luther’s return in 1522 there would be hardly anyone left.<sup>149</sup>

143 The same assumption is made in Gerle 2015, 138.

144 See, e.g., Posset 1999; Wiberg Pedersen 2003; 2007; Leppin 2014a and the literature cited there.

145 Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 241.

146 Hendrix 2015, 141.

147 Mikkola 2014b, 97.

148 Lehmann & Krodel 1963, 337, fn.4.

149 “...only the prior and a couple of old monks,” as noted in Roper 2016, 274.



Luther's letter was aimed at emphasizing his stance on the cloister vows. He also encouraged Linck to lead the meeting in the spirit of freedom of choice: it should be left to each and every brother himself whether he was going to abandon his vows or not.<sup>150</sup> Luther announced that he himself would "remain in this habit and custom if the world does not change (*nam et ego in habitu et ritu isto manebo, nisi mundus alius fiat*)."<sup>151</sup> It would thus seem that Luther counted himself among those who had the gift of chastity—either in the form of sexual anesthesia (like impotents or the one-in-a-thousand cases) or of God's special gift (enjoyed by the one-in-a-thousand cases), which made the struggle against lust possible. I have cited this twofold understanding of male chastity in Chapter IV.1.

The text of *On Monastic Vows*, which Luther composed in the fall of 1521 and finished in November, suggests that his experience was certainly not one of sexual anesthesia:

I myself, along with many others, have experienced how peaceful and quiet Satan was wont to be in the first year of being a priest and monk. Nothing seemed more delightful than chastity (*castitate*). But this most insidious enemy did this to lead us into temptation and into his trap.<sup>152</sup>

Luther described the nature of bodily temptations:

It may happen that you lived chastely for not one, but for two or three years, and later the flesh burned and the veins boiled (*urente carne et ferventibus venis*), when Satan blew his fiery breaths that made the coals burn (as it is said in Job). Certainly you could not control [yourself]. Therefore, the test of chastity cannot be made when lust keeps quiet, but when it rages.<sup>153</sup>

The context of these notions is Luther's dealing with the futility of the year of probation in monasteries. He was convinced that the whole of a human being's life was a time of probation in questions of chastity and the limitation of one-year period was a useless way to try to find out whether one truly had the gift of chastity.<sup>154</sup> Luther had shown this kind of criticism already in the *Babylonian Captivity* a year before, validating it with bodily aspects. He discussed the age when a human being was supposed to feel the flesh (*sentit homo carnem suam*)—the age of eighteen—and judged that it was questionable whether one could define the age at which point knowing one's flesh was possible.<sup>155</sup> I presume that feeling one's flesh in this context involved yet again the twofold understanding of chastity. It could be supposed that one did not have sexual feelings at all or that one experienced bodily sensations but was also able to govern them. Both of these options could prove to be false, however, as Luther pointed out by describing his own struggles with his body.

150 WA BR 2, no. 446, 414–415. To Wenzel Linck (December 18, 1521).

151 WA BR 2, no. 446, 415, 25–26.

152 WA 8, 660. *On Monastic Vows*. Translation by James Atkinson.

153 WA 8, 660. *On Monastic Vows*.

154 WA 8, 660–661. *On Monastic Vows*.

155 WA 6, 542. *Babylonian Captivity*.

The demands of Luther's own body had overtaken him after the time of probation as a novice. When Luther entered the monastery, his bodily temptations had been one of the concerns of his father, Hans Luther (1459–1530), as Luther explained in the dedication of *On Monastic Vows*. Indeed, he admitted to being in his “hot youth” when entering the monastery.<sup>156</sup> He was thus, according to his own words, one of those who had to struggle with desires—and as his words would seem to imply, perhaps he did not always succeed very well.

The same problem of bodily temptations are also apparent in Luther's letter to Melanchthon, which he wrote in Wartburg Castle in July 1521.

...my untamed flesh burns in great fire (*carnis meae indomitae uror magnis ignibus*); that is: I should be inflamed by the spirit but I am inflamed by the flesh (*ferveo carne*), lusts, laziness, free time, sleepiness...<sup>157</sup>

Luther also referred to sins and temptations that troubled his body during his stay at Wartburg Castle in a letter to John Lang.<sup>158</sup> In a footnote to this letter and an earlier one, written to Lang in 1516,<sup>159</sup> the American Edition of Luther's works suggests that his references to temptations and struggles with the flesh should be deemed as *geistliche Anfechtung* by nature.<sup>160</sup> Luther's own words in his Little Prayer Book in 1522 show, however, that bodily sensations such as sexual lust were profoundly connected with laziness and the other aspects mentioned above:

...whoever arouses or shows evil lust with shameful words, songs, stories, or pictures; whoever arouses and dirties himself through looking, touching, or willful thoughts; whoever does not avoid causes [of lust] such as overeating or drinking, idleness, laziness, [excessive] sleeping, or the company of women or men; whoever excites others to unchastity by means of superfluous adornment, gestures, etc.<sup>161</sup>

An important question in interpreting the former passage is that of how to understand the concept of flesh in this particular context. If the flesh is simply understood as an abstract counterpart to the spirit, one could assume that Luther was merely discussing spiritual struggles. If, on the other hand, the flesh is regarded as a synonym for the human body—which is as accurate an interpretation as the former, as I have shown already in Chapter II.1—the struggles can accordingly be held as bodily in nature. On the basis of Luther's language, which includes images of burning, fire, and boiling, for instance, I tend to regard that he was discussing quite concrete bodily sensations.

156 WA 8, 573. *On Monastic Vows*.

157 WA BR 2, no. 418, 356, 9–10. To Philipp Melanchthon (July 13, 1521).

158 WA BR 2, no. 445, 413. To Johann Lang (December 18, 1521).

159 WA BR 1, no. 28, 72. To Johann Lang (October 26, 1516).

160 This passage is compared by the editor to other passages that more clearly describe spiritual battles. See Krodel 1963, 28 (fn.10), 232, 412 *et passim*.

161 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 383–384. *Little Prayer Book*. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn. Luther's monastic background and perhaps especially Staupitz's influence on him are evident in this passage. Compare Staupitz's remarks in Roper 2016, 73.

One should also note, however, that the desires of the body were for Luther often interconnected with spiritual struggles. Lyndal Roper, for example, has maintained that spiritual struggles were very physical for Luther, although *Anfechtungen* as such had nothing to do with sexuality, as she has put it. Furthermore, in Roper's opinion Luther was "apparently untroubled ... by his sexuality" (for instance, by his seminal emissions). She has interpreted Luther's wordings about the probation year also as bodily, but in relation to *Anfechtungen*, and thus not sexual by nature.<sup>162</sup> I believe, however, that in these contexts the problem comprised various troubles of the bodily realm, *including* sexual desire. It seems quite a rigid interpretation to stress Luther's spiritual struggles, admitting their bodily dimension but dismissing sexuality. If Luther regarded the human being as a psychosomatic unit, why would he have dismissed sexuality from the whole?

In any case, Luther's language concerning his body contradicted his definition of policy regarding his lack of actions. The urges of his body were, as can be detected from Luther's words, powerful and uncontrolled.<sup>163</sup> His aim to convince men to leave the monastery is revealed in the attempt to universalize the threat of temptations. It thus seems that Luther sought not only to illustrate the feelings that one's (his own?) desire produced, but also, and more importantly, to convince his readers of the impossibility to remain content and thereby to remain in the cloister. Sexual desire was, as Luther presented, just around the corner, lurking every monk. His own example served to emphasize lust as every man's burden—in spite of the fact that he did not give the brothers a model example of correct action in practice.

Luther's hesitation to abandon his habit has been explained in modern scholarship by his personal situation, the social circumstances, and the common beliefs of the early 1520s. Scott Hendrix has noted Luther's difficulty in abandoning his identity as a cloistered monk even when the reforms were already in progress in Wittenberg. According to Hendrix, in the beginning of the 1520s Luther identified himself primarily as an Augustinian friar.<sup>164</sup> Heiko Oberman has also explained the difficulty in terms of Luther's personal conviction. It was challenging for him, Oberman claims, to abandon the cowl after being "a highly motivated friar" for twenty years.<sup>165</sup> Kaarlo Arffman has assumed that Luther's hesitation was a consequence of his apocalyptic expectation: he believed that the end of the world would happen in February 1524 due to the conjunction of the planets.<sup>166</sup>

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162 Roper 2016, 60.

163 For a similar notion, see Karant-Nunn 2012a, 1.

164 Hendrix 1984, 47.

165 Oberman 2003, 54.

166 Arffman 1996, 40–45. Lyndal Roper has, for her part, rejected any apocalyptic explanation. See Roper 2016, 273.

The heart of the matter can obviously be found in all of these explanations. The reason may partially lie in political factors as well. In the beginning of August 1521, a few months before the letter to Linck, Luther wrote to Georg Spalatin about the news he had heard from Wittenberg: “Oh God, are our people in Wittenberg going to give wives even to monks? On me they will not force a wife!”<sup>167</sup> Luther returned to the question of marrying a month later in his letter to Philipp Melanchthon, and again he refused to think about marrying.<sup>168</sup> Even though his colleagues had not pushed him to consider marriage, Luther wanted to highlight his conviction to stay unmarried.

Roper has evaluated that Luther was stating here that he did not have any sexual feelings at all.<sup>169</sup> I would rather interpret the statements as politically tactical. Spalatin, to whom the first mention of marriage was made, was the contact person between Luther and Frederick the Wise.<sup>170</sup> It is indeed possible that in the eyes of the elector, Luther wanted to be separated from the more radical evangelicals, such as Karlstadt, who were presently not only leading the reforms in Wittenberg but also marrying themselves. Luther’s overall aim to maintain his credibility and virtue in the eyes of authorities such as princes has indeed been noted in modern research.<sup>171</sup> Thus, the emphasis would have been part of maintaining the elector’s support in the delicate religious, political, and societal situation.

One can also detect an echo of the significance of monastic masculinity in relation to religious-political credibility. During the Middle Ages, monks were regarded as capable of high morals and self-control, which thus led to their promotion to leadership positions:

The self-controlled moderation of monastic men was frequently portrayed in contrast to the disorderly clerics who lacked the proper qualities to govern. ... Those who cannot control their bodies are not intended to lead. ... Entrance into the monastic life led to a stricter life, and one became more masculinized as a result. For those who left this life, their bodies once again became penetrable, lax, and less manly.<sup>172</sup>

As monastic masculinity was tied to the capability to govern, it seems logical that through his decision to remain in monastic robes, Luther was keen to present himself to the authorities as the one who was able to lead the evangelical movement, even though there was a possibility that he also would be questioned by some for not offering an example of the new, evangelical way of being a man.

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167 WA BR 2, no. 426, 377, 4–5. To Georg Spalatin (August 6, 1521).

168 WA BR 2, no. 428, 385, 128–131. To Philipp Melanchthon (September 9, 1521).

169 Roper 2016, 274.

170 Roper 2010a, 287–288, 291.

171 See, e.g., Rublack 2005, 47.

172 Thibodeaux 2015, 23, 25.

Luther wore his monastic garb until October 1524, when he was living in the Augustinian cloister.<sup>173</sup> By 1524, however, Luther's letters that treated his own bodiliness had become loaded with speculation about his willingness to marry. In a letter to Georg Spalatin in November 1524, Luther regarded his own marriage as impossible "not because my flesh is sexless, feeling nothing (lit. my flesh does not feel my sex), nor am I wood or stone (*non quod carnem meam aut sexum meum non sentiam, cum neque lignum neque lapis sim*)..."<sup>174</sup> A little less than five months later, due to Spalatin's request Luther again returned to the question of his own marriage. He stated: "You also write me about marrying. Do not be amazed that I am not pulled by it, although I am such a famous lover (*[c]eterum quod de meo coniugio scribis, nolo hoc mireris, me non ducere, qui sic famosus sum amator*)."<sup>175</sup> In this latter letter, Luther cited also the possibility of becoming effeminate. He wondered how he himself had not turned into a woman (*quod non iam dudum femina factus sum*), since he wrote so much about marriage and took up with women so often. As he himself noted, this was a far more interesting question than the reasons for his unmarried life.<sup>176</sup> Regarding the mention of Luther's fame as a lover, it most likely is a humorous reference to his involvement in the escape of the nuns of Marienthorn, Nimbschen, in April 1523 and his assistance in finding spouses for them.<sup>177</sup>

Discussing Luther's way of presenting his masculinity in the Leipzig debate in 1519, Ulinka Rublack has noted that

German men praised themselves for their simplicity, courage, honesty, clarity and a straight-up-and-down heterosexual masculinity which distanced itself from anything feminine or 'sodomite'. Luther's way of conducting the Leipzig debate thus intended to show his patriotic, eloquent manly conduct.<sup>178</sup>

Especially by 1524, Luther had to justify his life as a single man, as the letters above show, but he did not have the tendency to refrain at his masculinity's expense. This is revealed particularly in his words about the threat of becoming feminine in the company of so many women. Luther's notion of avoiding effeminacy served a reverse goal of emphasizing his masculinity, which had not faltered in spite of the circumstances. Thus, he did not believe his own manliness to be fragile, but instead representing strength, virility, and self-control. In this way, Luther actually conne-

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173 Brecht 1986, 99; Oberman 2003, 54; Roper 2016, 274. The cloister was, however, empty by this time since all of the other brothers had left.

174 WA BR 3, no. 800, 394, 22–23. To Georg Spalatin (November 30, 1524).

175 WA BR 3, no. 857, 474–475, 13–14. To Georg Spalatin (April 16, 1525).

176 WA BR 3, no. 857, 475, 14–16. To Georg Spalatin (April 16, 1525).

177 For Luther's involvement in the escape and its aftermath, see, e.g., Roper 2016, 273–275.

178 Rublack 2005, 47.

cted his own masculinity quite straightforwardly to the traditional understanding of manly features, which were presented by many of his contemporaries as well.

All of the passages profoundly describe Luther's construction of his own masculinity in a historical situation in transition, especially in terms of redefining gender roles. The quotation concerning Luther's experience of sexual desire after the probation year can be seen as a part of his justification of the idea of human life as life in the flesh. It is fair to say, however, that he did not redefine his own way of being wholly in accordance with his new ideal. The quotations above refer to maleness with sexuality as a fundamental part of man's bodiliness and his way of being—a feature admitted long before Luther. Sexual desires often had negative connotations in the texts from 1521, such as references to the trap of the devil, which was connected to other undesired bodily states, such as laziness and drowsiness. In letters from 1524, these negative connotations were not present. Juxtaposition as rhetorical means can be seen, however, in Luther's opposing of male bodiliness with wood and stone, namely, motionlessness and coldness as a way of being. In the examples of his own body, Luther followed the medieval view of the man as hot and virile by nature. Hence, even though Luther's sexuality would not have posed a problem for himself, as Roper has suggested—a notion which does not seem to hold true in light of the discussions made in this study—he cited it as something very present in him vis-à-vis his everyday life.

Luther's masculinity was colored with the idea of struggling with one's desires. This, of course, reminds very much of the traditional idea of clerical struggle. Even though in other contexts he rejected the struggle for clerics as impossible, it was clearly part of his own self-image. One has to bear in mind, though, that Luther elsewhere connected the struggle not to clerics specifically but to all men, as has been discussed already in the previous chapter. Luther's way of living outside matrimony should, accordingly, have been morally wrong from his point of view—should he have followed his theoretical formulations. Indeed, the construction of Luther's own masculinity seems to have involved a mixing of the traditional viewpoints of clerical and monastic masculinity with his personal ideas of being a man and, moreover, the allowance of different rules for himself than for others. His self-fashioning—that is, his construction of identity and a public persona—led him to stress his masculine features from slightly different viewpoints, depending on the context.

A reverse example of masculinity and one of the few exceptions of the lust-driven male body, and a praiseworthy example of such, was Bernard of Clairvaux, whom Luther greatly idealized in *On Monastic Vows*. A similar tone of idealization of Bernard as a man cannot be found in Luther's other writings in 1520–1524 which include references to Bernard, except in a letter to Melanchthon in

September 1521.<sup>179</sup> This makes the matter even more interesting, as it reveals the significance of the historical and textual context of certain writings.

According to Luther, Bernard was a rare example of someone who possessed the true chastity a man should have if entering the monastery: “And we concede that the one is wonderfully saved who has pure faith, makes the vows, and lives according to them, like Bernard and many others have maintained.”<sup>180</sup> “Therefore it is inevitable that how Bernard was, all the saintly and pious devout (*religiosos*) must have been.”<sup>181</sup> “St. Bernard and others, who were happily monks, surrendered to the vows.”<sup>182</sup> It is evident that Bernard belonged, in Luther’s view, to the third group of exceptions to marriage, a rich spirit who could choose his lifestyle. Luther differentiated between Bernard and the majority of men living in the cloister: “And if there were [men] in the monasteries of Bernard’s caliber (*eiusmodi Bernhardi*), they [the monasteries] could be tolerated...”<sup>183</sup> Else Marie Wiberg Pedersen has also noted—although she has not focused on Bernard’s masculinity per se—that he was for Luther a “very happy exception.”<sup>184</sup>

In the medieval ideal of transcendence, one of the most crucial points was the capability to conquer one’s age:

An old saint who conquered the sexual apathy natural to his advanced age would not be praised for it by monastic biographers. It obviously cannot be enough in itself that the quality achieved should belong in the order of nature to some other age of life: it must also be a quality which the writer ... regards as admirable. That being so, and not otherwise, the fact that it is achieved *contra naturam* will add ... an extra grace and grandeur.<sup>185</sup>

Even though Luther was not a monastic biographer, the same tendency that is described in the citation can be found in his words as well. As a man, Bernard became the target of Luther’s adoration for several reasons, which were all connected. The most important factor in terms of Bernard’s bodiliness seems to have been his sexual anesthesia. As I noted in the previous Chapter IV.1, in Luther’s opinion this gift was given to only a handful of people. The question was thus not about Bernard’s capability to control his body with his mind but of the complete sexual apathy granted to him by God. As Luther saw it, an extremely rare gift of this kind was worth his praise.

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179 WA BR 2, no. 428, 382–386. To Philipp Melanchthon (September 9, 1521).

180 WA 8, 600. *On Monastic Vows*. See similar statements also on pages 602, 612, 617, and in WA BR 2, no. 428, 383. To Philipp Melanchthon (September 9, 1521).

181 WA 8, 602. *On Monastic Vows*.

182 WA BR 2, no. 428, 383. To Philipp Melanchthon (September 9, 1521).

183 WA 8, 622. *On Monastic Vows*.

184 Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 240.

185 Burrow 1988, 105.

Without a doubt, the heart of the matter was Luther's own interest to illuminate Bernard as a "divinely preserved"<sup>186</sup> human being in order to explain his approval of Bernard's life as a monk. Nevertheless, the aspect of Bernard's bodiliness became an essential part of Luther's justification regarding the cloistered life of men. Since Bernard realized the particular God-given way of being that was in him, he lived also in accordance with his conscience.<sup>187</sup> The complex interrelationship between the body, soul, conscience, and, ultimately, salvation, which have been discussed in a few contexts in this study, become visible also in the case of Bernard.

Bernard's humbleness was another critical factor which Luther emphasized and which made him an ideal man. As Luther put it, Bernard had admitted that his way of living was not one to be proud of as such, and nor did he expect justification and salvation on the basis of his own merit; instead he acknowledged only Christ as the savior of human beings.<sup>188</sup> Wiberg Pedersen has also pointed out that humility, which Bernard illustrated for Luther, was a disposition that Luther believed every human being should have in regard to their lives.<sup>189</sup>

As I have noted above, a biblical model of humility for Luther was Mary, with humility signifying not her piety or deeds, but her sincerity before God. It seems that Bernard was for Luther a similar example in regard to the ideal attitude of a human being, though Luther did not exalt Bernard as an example for all human beings but merely to men. Thus, Bernard's example was Luther's way of giving justification to those who wanted to stay in the monastery and were assured they had God's approval and special grace to do so. He did not go so far as to recommend the option of monastic life, though: it would have been against his overall aims.

Luther's overall situation is reflected well in his adoration of Bernard. As I have shown elsewhere, Luther's willingness to address the cloister vows was greatly affected by the culminating situation in Wittenberg during his stay at Wartburg Castle. He was hesitant to make any practical guidelines for his followers concerning the cloister vows until the writings, which Luther deemed largely insufficient, of his colleagues—the high-profile Melanchthon, Karlstadt, and Gabriel Zwilling—and events in Wittenberg forced him to do so.<sup>190</sup> When writing *On Monastic Vows* Luther had decided to "liberate young people from the burning sensations and dirty and condemned flows [i.e. ejaculations] of this hellish celibate,"<sup>191</sup> as he

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186 WA 8, 622. *On Monastic Vows*.

187 Luther discussed conscience in general in the treatise, emphasizing the importance of the topic. See, for instance, WA 8, 591–594. *On Monastic Vows*.

188 See especially WA 8, 601–602. *On Monastic Vows*; Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 240–241.

189 Wiberg Pedersen 2007, 221. Wiberg Pedersen justifies this notion with Luther's treatment in the *Magnificat*.

190 Mikkola 2014b, 88–89, 92–93.

191 WA BR 2, no. 438, 403, 46–47. To Georg Spalatin (November 11, 1521).



boasted in his letter to Spalatin. His personal experience was one of the reasons for this, Luther explained.<sup>192</sup> His discussion concerning Bernard suggests, however, that he wanted to keep the possibility to choose cloistered life open as well. Otherwise he would have not, I believe, made so many attempts to justify and glorify him. The lack of these kinds of glorifying notions of Bernard in other contexts suggests that over the years, Luther had less and less need to justify that monastic life could suit the bodiliness of some people.

In sum, Luther deciphered both the rule and the exception, as it were, in his discussion concerning his own bodiliness and that of Bernard of Clairvaux. His own body was the model example of the rule as he experienced sexual feelings like any other man. At the same time, he found in Bernard the example of the exception, whom he described as the special man whose body had received grace. Rather than believing his own model to be shameful, however, Luther made it a merit for himself, especially in his later letters. In spite of this, and despite his general judgment concerning the cloistered way of life, he was not keen to alter his own life. The same kind of hesitation was seen also in his advice to the three nuns, discussed in Chapter III.3. It was perhaps easier for Luther to write norms and ideals that required major changes in one's life than to actually follow them in reality. I will return to this question and to the theme of Luther's bodiliness in the second part of the study.

## FRAGILITY OF MASCULINITY: CASTRATES AND IMPOTENTS

Luther's discussion of castrates and impotents reveals a similar type of juxtaposition as that between Bernard and other, lustful monks, including Luther himself. Luther treated both impotent and castrated men—men with bodily deficiencies—in *On Married Life* when discussing those persons who were not obliged to marry. Impotents were also touched on in *Babylonian Captivity*, although much more briefly. Although bodily deficiency, which resulted in sexual incapability, was a common denominator for both of these groups of men, Luther drew rather different images of them as men, thus revealing some critical facets of his understanding of being a man and living in the male body.

For Luther, castrates—the ones “cut by people's hands, the cocks (*mit menschen henden verschnytten, die capp hanen*)”<sup>193</sup>—were above all a pitiful group, since they could not lead the normal life of a man as a result of violence done to them by other men. Castrates had sexual desire within them, but they were not equipped for consummation. Thus, it had become impossible for them to relieve the pressure

192 WA BR 2, no. 438, 47–48.

193 *Die capp hanen* is arguably an altered form of *Kapaun*, which was used not only of castrated cocks but also of men as well. It appears in different forms in medieval sources, with one close to Luther's formulation being *Kaphahn*.

of desire, and therefore women had become an obsession for them. According to Luther, castrates felt evil lust and constantly sought the company of women. He justified the notion with a quotation from Proverbs: “He who cannot sing always insists upon singing.” Even more, in Luther’s opinion castrates had become “quite effeminate (*gantz weybisch*),”<sup>194</sup> with effeminacy obviously being a negative element.

According to Susan Karant-Nunn, in Luther’s usage the concept of effeminate referred to “weakness and inferiority.” Thus, on the contrary, superiority and strength illustrated manly behavior for Luther.<sup>195</sup> This notion is indeed supported by, for instance, Luther’s discussion in the *Freedom of a Christian*, wherein he paralleled puerility and effeminacy when regarding that many pastors preached “childish and effeminate nonsense (*puerilia et muliebria delyramenta*).”<sup>196</sup> Effeminacy held more complex connotations than mere weakness, however, especially in the case of castrates.

Luther’s statements mirror the common evaluations of both contemporary and prior authors regarding castrates.<sup>197</sup> Various medieval stories of revenge, crusades, and wars included portrayals of castrations, and the opinions of many held certain consequences to be inescapable, such as irreparable loss of maleness, moral deficiency along with the physical deficiency, and the loss of socially recognized gender.<sup>198</sup> On the other hand, as several authors recognized, sexual desire could not have been removed from these men with their testicles. Because of a lack of masculine sexual organs, the castrate did not have a socially accepted gender, which resulted in suspicions about his sexual behavior with women but also with men.<sup>199</sup> In other words, the form of the body dictated one’s social recognition, or the lack of it.

As Martin Irvine has noted in his study on Petrus Abelard, the lack of genitals could be understood as the loss of masculine *virtus*.<sup>200</sup> Merry Wiesner-Hanks has maintained that men who “sank to the level of women” were suspicious and that their behavior was considered unnatural. Sinking to the level of women was understood, for instance, as getting sexually excited too frequently and easily, which suspicious minds connected to intentionally searching for opportunities for sexual intercourse. These kinds of men were effeminate due to their lack of self-control (the manly ability) and their inclination toward expressing lust (the female characteristic). Men who were ruled by their bodies rather than by their minds were, in the commonly held view, feminine.<sup>201</sup>

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194 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 279. *On Married Life*.

195 Karant-Nunn 2008, 174.

196 WA 7, 58. *Freedom of a Christian*.

197 A few of those are described in Irvine 2000, 88–90.

198 Ferroul 2000, 136–137; Irvine 2000, 90–92, 94.

199 Ferroul 2000, 139–140; Irvine 2000, 87, 93–94.

200 Irvine 2000, 94.

201 Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 52.

Luther joined in the traditional, dichotomist view of womanhood as connected to lust and manhood as connected to self-control.<sup>202</sup> From Luther's perspective, castrates did not fulfill the definition of maleness due to a feminine kind of sexual behavior, that is, weakness vis-à-vis the dominance of the body and its urges and a lack of control of the mind. In addition, the threat to actually "occupy the feminized position of the one penetrated"<sup>203</sup> can be made on the grounds of Luther's judgment on the castrates. The strict norms of sexual behavior, including the norms concerning masculine and feminine ways of realizing sexuality, were thus in the background of Luther's view.

In other words, the masculine body and its performances were an outer sign of inner masculinity, which suggests a profound connection between the body, one's way of being, and social acceptance. The importance of the body both as a symbolic and actual basis for being a man was a view that Luther shared with his contemporaries. The notion of the significance of bodily appearance seems also to point to the fragility of masculinity on the level of discourse, which concerned not only castrates but represented a possible social threat to other men as well. According to Luther's rhetoric, the suspicion of effeminacy could be targeted at any man whose behavior did not meet the expectations of the proper masculine way of being, as my discussion on *Hausväter* demonstrated.

The other group of disabled men, the impotents (*impotentes*), differed from castrates in that their condition was congenital, which was a much more significant factor for Luther. Impotents were not able to produce seed and multiply, due to some sort of physical frigidity, weakness, or physical lack: "[it is the situation] when a husband or wife is unfit for marriage because of the members' or nature's deficiencies of any sort," as Luther put it.<sup>204</sup> Luther held impotents to be cold and weak by nature, and he observed that impotent ones existed among both men and women, although far more rarely among the latter. He highlighted the physical nature of impotence by comparing it to blindness and being crippled; in all of these cases, the human body was defective in such a way that it could not function according to its nature. As Luther remarked, God had excused congenital impotents from His command to be fruitful and multiply.<sup>205</sup> Thus, the image of an impotent contained the idea of a lack of sexual drive.

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202 For the dichotomy, see Bynum 2012, 151–179, esp. 151, 156; Gerle 2015, 112, 126.

203 Irvine 2000, 94.

204 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 287. *On Married Life*.

205 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 278. *On Married Life*. The American edition (LW 45, 19) does not mention the coldness of an impotent, but refers to the phenomenon with the word "frigid," which does not do full justice to the medieval understanding of human temperature as a notable factor concerning the sexes, sexual performance, and procreation.

There is no evidence of the actual gender-specific nature of problems involving impotence during the late medieval period, but both men and women were considered to suffer from it. However, male impotence presented a more serious threat to society, not just to the masculinity of a single individual. In order to be accepted and honored as a male, man was perpetually obliged to prove his maleness through sexual action and keep his spouse content. Thus, man's sexual functioning was first and foremost a sign of his maleness, which also defined him in the sight of his community, as the question of sexual inability was closely related to his social position and the exercise of his profession.<sup>206</sup> This gendered aspect may be in the background of Luther's evaluation—as male impotence had more profound social consequences, it may have been more important to take into consideration than the socially less significant form of female impotence.

Luther treated impotence as *impotentia antecedens*, a congenital impotence, in the context of discussing divorce. As Steven Ozment has noted, Luther recognized only congenital, premarital impotence as a legitimate reason for divorce; hence, he followed canon law on this question. There was also an understanding of impotence developing after marriage (*impotentia superveniens*) “either for physical reasons or from growing hostility and repulsion between spouses.”<sup>207</sup> During the later Middle Ages, annulments of marriage could be granted in cases, for instance, where the wife's age was proper for childbearing but the husband was impotent. Isabel Davis has remarked that this can be seen as an interpretation of Christian doctrine that met the contemporary cultural needs.<sup>208</sup>

Luther rejected divorce on the ground of *impotentia superveniens*. He treated the issue through the other spouse's becoming disabled and no longer competent to fulfill the conjugal duty. The healthy one's duty was to live with the invalid: “May he not take another? By no means, but serve God in the person of the invalid...”<sup>209</sup> Thus, the legitimate impotence that Luther was describing had its roots merely in the male body, not in mental or societal factors. As I have presented above, Greco-Roman medical theories were the grounds of the medieval understanding of the factors influencing the human body.<sup>210</sup> Congenital impotents may thus have represented for Luther unbalanced male bodies in terms of humors, qualities, and temperature; a hint of this is found in his notion of impotents' coldness and weakness. The normal male body was considered as hot while coldness was associated with the female body. The importance of bodily temperature is clarified in

206 Brundage 1987, 457–458; Bullough 1994, 41.

207 Ozment 1983, 95. For male impotence, see also Bullough 1994, 41–42.

208 Davis 2007, 68–69.

209 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 287, 291. *On Married Life*. For the complexity of issues concerning impotence and marriage in the Middle Ages, see, e.g., Brundage 1987.

210 See the discussion of corrupt female bodies in Chapter III.2.

Shaw's remark: "Differences in heat determine not only the production and quality of humors, but also the apparent anatomical features of gender."<sup>211</sup> Men who were deemed to be cold and dry by their qualities were regarded as melancholic, desiring little and capable of little.<sup>212</sup>

In practice, men's sexuality—that is, their capability—was closely related to their social role. "Full male sexual maturity" was achieved by the status of the husband, and it symbolized political, social, and financial maturity.<sup>213</sup> It was a crucial factor in having economic autonomy and full political membership, as well as in receiving citizenship and guild membership. When dealing with the customs of wedding nights, Roper has also pointed out the society's expectancy of aggressive male sexuality: social pressure could conversely lead to impotence. The community's expectancy of a man's sexuality thus concerned wide-ranging aspects of his life, which made maleness rather fragile overall. Impotence could thereby be a converse result of expectations of aggressive male sexuality.<sup>214</sup> This is clearly not the kind of congenital impotence that Luther was thinking of, although the aspect of social threat was present in both forms of impotence.

The discussions above provide revealing examples of the social pressure laid on men and the complexity of issues around the man's body and honor. My examination of Luther's views on castrates and impotents parallels Roper's notions of Reformation in Augsburg in the regard that sexual virility was one of the key elements in defining the proper masculine way of being.<sup>215</sup> It is impossible to know the cause and effect between Luther's thinking and the common expectancies of maleness *de facto*. Based on the former discussions, however, I tend to think that in most cases during the first half of the 1520s Luther accepted the already existent essential, societal, and normative views concerning both men and women, including the issue of impotence.

Both Luther's text and the contemporary opinion support the idea of men's nature as representing sexual desire and virility. On the other hand, as the case of castrates especially illuminate, the expectancy to be able to control oneself. The castrates' effeminacy was a proof not only of their weakness but also of the inevitable force of sexual desire within men. Because of the lack of a proper masculine body and male organs, the whole of their masculinity was at stake. Strong sexual

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211 Shaw 1998, 66.

212 Bullough 1994, 41. Bullough presents a table of four different types of males: sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic, on the basis of a medical writing from the thirteenth century.

213 Roper 1989, 135–136; Wunder 2002, 34; Karras 2003, 16–17. Karras has evaluated that a man was not recognized as fully adult until he became a father. The status of a husband was thus not adequate. I have discussed Karras's view in Chapter IV.1.

214 Roper 1989, 145.

215 See also Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, 155.

desire and the willingness and capability to fulfill it thus defined for Luther natural male sexuality. Castrates did not fit into the picture of the virile, yet self-controlled male, but instead they showed weakness and inability in the arena of sexuality, thus breaking gender roles.

Impotents, on the other hand, even though they were exceptions to the normal bodiliness of men, were not a threat to norms regarding gender and morals or to the social order in a similar fashion as the castrates. The different bodily aspects—first and foremost, sexual desire—were a major reason for this juxtaposition. Congenital impotency signified a lack of sexual drive, whereas castration did not remove it from the man. Male sexuality, the force which had an influence not only on the individual but on society as a whole, thus became the key factor of the juxtaposition. The lack of sexual desire, as seen with impotents, was the lack of the capability to unbalance social structures. Therefore, Luther shared and reasserted the view of his contemporaries regarding the influence of the male sexual drive on society as both a constructive and unbalancing force.

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All in all, this chapter has shown that Luther regarded the male body and gender as normative humanity.<sup>216</sup> He maintained that man was superior to woman in both mental and bodily qualities, and therefore his prerogative was to hold the highest position. The man was entitled to participate in all walks of human life within the ecclesiastical and social spheres, as well as in households. The distinguishing mark of proper masculinity was to be a *Hausvater*—an ideal that Luther applied in principal, along with his contemporaries, to all men. Being entitled to certain prerogatives also demanded that the man acknowledged his responsibilities—responsibility to work for the family and to maintain one's honor in the eyes of other people. The latter point specifically became clear in the discussions concerning Luther's masculinity and that of castrates and impotents. Male honor could, however, be understood differently by other people and by God, as the discussion on fatherhood proved. In Luther's rhetoric, the proper way of being a man did not obviate behavior that was generally deemed to be feminine. A manly man carried his burdens bravely and boldly as a devoted husband and father.

Properly represented masculinity was for Luther one of the cornerstones of community and its social relationships. Carter Lindberg has discussed the same issue by noting that "Luther and those who followed him attempted to redefine their culture's understanding of male gender from uncontrollable impulse to social

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216 A similar conclusion is made in Cortright 2011, 244.

responsibility.”<sup>217</sup> In the level of ideals, the case was as Lindberg has presented it: Luther demanded that men should act responsibly. Luther stressed, however, that in practice, being a man posed some serious risks from the viewpoint of society. Luther readily admitted that male sexual desire was a powerful force that could destabilize the community; it was not only young men who were prone to act according to their bodily urges, as this threat existed for older men as well. The basis of Luther’s discussion was, by and large, an understanding of a universal masculine sexual drive as an uncontrollable force. Luther’s emphasis on sexual desire as the determining element in male bodiliness despite one’s age becomes evident in several contexts, including his rhetoric concerning, for instance, *Buben*, castrates, and impotents. Thus, the male body and sexuality defined masculinity and partaking in society in a most profound way.

Hendrix has stated that sexuality was an essential part of masculinity in Germany in the early sixteenth century.<sup>218</sup> To take the reasoning of Hendrix further, one can assume that even though sexuality was a core aspect of evangelical rhetoric, it was not ultimately the heart of the matter *per se*, or at least not in Luther’s writings. Rather, acting according to or against God’s word was. Thus, the central question for Luther was whether one lived his life per the body or those qualities received from God. Monks and unmarried priests did not follow the proper path in their lives, but denied the purpose of their creation and the urges of their bodies. Thus, human bodiliness, sexuality, conscience, and salvation were intertwined in Luther’s view when discussing masculinity—and, accordingly, in his views on femininity.

One has to bear in mind, however, that this was the theoretical ideal Luther that presented to his readers. In practice, not all males were in the same position or held in reverence. The short discussions on Frederick and Albert suggest—much like the discussion on Luther’s responses to real-life women in Chapter III—that one has to look continuously at the pragmatic situations as well, as they offer a different window onto Luther’s thinking on the proper gendered way of being.

Luther’s own example is also illuminative. By and large, this chapter has confirmed the idea advanced in Charles Cortright’s study: “Luther’s own body ... contributed to and molded how he thought and talked about the body...”<sup>219</sup> Ultimately, Luther was not ready to fully accept the demands of the proper masculine way of being in his own case. He also left room for those who regarded themselves as special cases and thus fit for cloistered life, as the treatment of Bernard of Clairvaux shows. As Luther presented in his texts, the ones who knew God’s will and

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217      Lindberg 1996, 366. Lindberg’s notion is highlighted in Wiberg Pedersen 2017, 136.

218      Hendrix 2008, 71, 77–78.

219      Cortright 2011, 5.

were thereby qualified to outline the norms and ideals concerning masculinity—including that of the exceptional cases—were the evangelical-leaning interpreters, especially Luther himself. In this way, he could apply different kinds of norms to himself than to others. I will return to this in the next two chapters of this study.



## V BODILINESS AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IN LUTHER'S MARRIAGE

Until 1524, condemned as a heretic and an outlaw, Luther had been expecting death as a martyr. Arguably, he had also been waiting for the end of the world and the *parousia* of Christ in the beginning of 1524, along with a predicted planetary conjunction in February.<sup>1</sup> When neither his personal nor apocalyptic expectations were fulfilled, he carried on with his life. One of the very actions was his decision to abandon his monastic garb, and in October 1524 he shed his habit publicly for good.<sup>2</sup> Until that point, Luther had treated his manhood and masculinity in terms of the world of secular and regular clergy, and more precisely in relation to the struggle of clerics with desire.<sup>3</sup>

Luther had been forced to explicitly justify his choice to stay unmarried at least from 1524, as has been discussed. He had made his conviction clear already in 1521, when the first priests and monks began to marry, although at that point there were hardly yet any challenges.<sup>4</sup> Over the course of years, however, the pressure began to affect every evangelical-leaning pastor, not least of all Luther himself.<sup>5</sup>

From 1525 onwards, Luther's personal life underwent a profound transition when he married Katharina von Bora and started a family. Modern scholarship has presented various reasons for Luther's marriage: political, religious, and personal factors have been cited. The Peasants' Revolt has been regarded as a source of disappointment for Luther and a reason for him to marry.<sup>6</sup> Other popular explanations, supported by Luther's own words, are his aims to oppose the devil, to irritate the pope, and to please his father.<sup>7</sup> One of the reasons that he explicated was his wish for his marriage to serve as an example to Albert of Mainz, which can be seen as a specifically political motive. Luther wanted to encourage Albert to marry his concubine and thus to join the side of the evangelicals. He had formerly criticized this relationship, as has already been discussed.<sup>8</sup> In any case, the time of Luther's marriage was not randomly chosen

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1 Arffman 1996, 40–45.

2 Brecht 1986, 99; Oberman 2003, 54. Several scholars have paid attention to the question of Luther's hesitation to give up his habit and marry, and thus indirectly the question of why Luther finally did give it up. See, for instance, Oberman 2003, 54–55; Arffman 2006, 172. For Luther's apocalyptic expectations, see Arffman 1996, 40–47.

3 See Chapter IV.2.

4 See WA BR 2, no. 426, 377, 4–5. To Georg Spalatin (August 6, 1521); WA BR 2, no. 428, 385, 128–131. To Philipp Melanchthon (September 9, 1521).

5 See, e.g., Lindberg 1996, 99–101.

6 Arffman 2006, 172; Roper 2016, 273, 278.

7 Lindberg 1996, 101; Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 187; Roper 2016, 273, 277–278.

8 WA BR 3, no. 883, 522. To Johann Rühel (June 3, 1525); Roper 2016, 279. After the Peasants' Revolt Albert chose to remain in the Catholic side, thus following elector Joachim I Nestor of Brandenburg (1484–1535), his brother.

but conscious, as Oberman has pointed out.<sup>9</sup> Although the wording of the impact of Luther's marriage on Albert's plans seems to exaggerate Luther's significance, it emphasizes the definite political aspects that the marriage entailed in his mind.

A somewhat less discussed but at least equally important factor in Luther's decision to marry was Katharina von Bora herself. Her role in the marriage process has been somewhat neglected, even though modern scholars do not share, for instance, Søren Kierkegaard's (1813–1855) interpretation that von Bora was as important as a plank.<sup>10</sup> On the basis of Luther's own testimony, von Bora was actually the initiator in their marriage. She had originally wanted to marry a man from one of the noble Nuremberg families, Hieronymus Baumgartner, with whom she fell in love with quite soon after her escape from Nimbschen. Baumgartner's family did not, however, approve of a former bride of Christ as a bride. Caspar Glatz (?–1551) was suggested as a husband, but von Bora rejected him. She instead informed Nicholas von Amsdorf that he himself or Luther were the only suitable candidates from her point of view.<sup>11</sup>

Lyndal Roper has advanced the interesting idea that two deaths—Luther's confessor John von Staupitz (1460–1524) in December 1524 and Luther's elector in May 1525—were also of importance. She considers: "Perhaps it was only when Staupitz had died that Luther, freed from the man who had been his spiritual father, finally felt able to become a father."<sup>12</sup> A similar reasoning could be used of the death of Frederick the Wise: perhaps his death liberated Luther from his repeated statements that he was not keen to marry, cited in the former part of the study.

In the following, I will treat Luther's description of his manhood through the ways he treated his wedding, his wife, and his children in the period from 1525 to 1530. At the same time, his depiction of von Bora's femininity is scrutinized.<sup>13</sup> The most central questions are: Did Luther adopt new ways of considering femininity through von Bora? Did his subsequent understanding of his own masculinity differ from his earlier views? And if it did, how did being a husband and fatherhood alter his rhetoric? My analysis in this chapter is based primarily on Luther's letters from May 1525 to June 1530, although his theoretical texts are used as additional material. The letters cannot be taken at face value as they are influenced not only

9 Oberman 1982, 292.

10 See Bainton 1971, 23; Zschoch 2001, 137.

11 Smith 1999, 748; Stjerna 2009, 55–56; Roper 2016, 275–276. Von Bora's influence on Luther shall be treated more closely in chapter V.2.

12 Roper 2016, 273, 278.

13 As in the case of other contemporaries of the study thus far, Luther's wife is referred to by her last name in order to create gender equality in terms of the study's discussions. Thus, the study differs from the majority of works concerning von Bora, as they call her Katharina or even by the nickname Käthe given to her by Luther. My aim thereby is to discontinue the perhaps unconscious way how scholars treat von Bora as a less serious agent than Luther—a portrait that inevitably follows from treating the man with his surname and the woman at the same time with her first name.

by *ars dictaminis*, the art of letter-writing, but also by Luther's motives to represent things from a particular viewpoint (for example, in order to convince his readers). Nonetheless, the goal (as above) is not to find out *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, but to study Luther's narration of his own experience.

## 1. MANHOOD IN TRANSITION: THE BEGINNING OF THE LUTHER MARRIAGE

Von Bora's name appears for the first time in Luther's correspondence already in April 1523,<sup>14</sup> but in the context of Luther's plans to marry only on May 4 or May 5, 1525, when he noted to John Rühel that he was going to wed his "Käte."<sup>15</sup> At the time, however, Luther pondered whether he was "capable enough for it (*tüchtig genug dazu*)," and he suspected that his marriage would perhaps remain merely a marriage of Joseph (*eine verlobte Josephsehe sein*),<sup>16</sup> that is, unconsummated. The couple's betrothal took place on June 13 and festivities were arranged for June 27.<sup>17</sup> Three days after the wedding, on June 16, 1525, Luther shared the news with Spalatin: "I blocked up the mouth that defamed me [and I did this] with Katharina von Bora (*Catharina Borana*), my Spalatin."<sup>18</sup>

Luther's marriage was a starting shot for hard criticism from the Catholic side.<sup>19</sup> Still, according to Luther's letter to Spalatin, his marriage served to silence those who had been mocking him. It thus seems obvious that the sceptics Luther was discussing here were from the evangelical camp, with questions concerning his hesitation to marry. Luther had publicly admitted having sexual feelings in *On Monastic Vows*, for instance, as has been discussed. Since he was not a man with God's special gift of chastity, he should have been bound by the same preconditions as other men. Accordingly, "the mouth" that had been defaming Luther before his marriage may have asked how he could be an honorable man if he did not live according to his own teaching.

Indeed, as Carter Lindberg has noted on a general level: "They [the Wittenberg theologians] had encouraged other priests to marry but had not themselves taken this step, and thus their own credibility was on the line."<sup>20</sup> By giving up the habit and taking the step to become a husband, Luther located himself—as an example of a cleric with sexual feelings—among his contemporaries and pointed out that the proper way of being a man was the same for laity and clerics. His own marriage

14 WA BR 3, no. 600, 55. To Georg Spalatin (April 10, 1523).

15 WA BR 3, no. 860, 482. To Johann Rühel (May 4 (?), 1525). "...will ich meine Käte noch zur Ehe nehmen..." Rühel was one of the few Luther informed beforehand of his marriage plans.

16 WA BR 3, no. 883, 522, 13, 18. To John Rühel (June 3, 1525).

17 Roper 2016, 275. Betrothal was viewed as an act of contracting a marriage.

18 WA BR 3, no. 892, 533, 4–5. To Georg Spalatin (June 16, 1525).

19 See, for instance, Fudge 2003.

20 Lindberg 1996, 99.

served clearly to prove this point. Moreover, with this action Luther placed himself among a larger group of males—that of husbands and potential fathers.

Luther tied himself to the group of newlywed husbands by narrating his emotions to von Amsdorf: “Before hearing the prayer I was compelled [by a] turbulent [feeling] in me, just as is accustomed to happen.”<sup>21</sup> The prayer (*ora*) most probably referred to one of the prayers that were said in the pastor’s blessing—given that the occasion was arranged somewhat according to traditional customs, apart from private Mass, which had usually been part of the wedding.<sup>22</sup> The prayer Luther was referring to could have meant the blessing of the ring, the Lord’s Prayer, or a prayer of some kind for the couple. It is also possible, however, that the prayer alluded to the one said during the bedding. According to Karant-Nunn, though, there was no prayer as such in the traditional custom of the bedding, despite the pastor’s brief words and a sign of the cross, sometimes supplemented with the swinging of a censer over the bed or a sprinkling of holy water.<sup>23</sup>

On the basis of her reading of Luther’s pre-marriage letters, Lyndal Roper has regarded that he was slightly insecure before his wedding night in terms of his ability to engage in intercourse: sex with a notably younger wife was possibly a frightening thought.<sup>24</sup> Luther’s narrative about his turbulent feeling, as well as his idea of *Josephsehe*, indeed speaks about his hesitation on the threshold of a new stage of life. Luther’s turbulent feeling was most certainly a mental state, but it could also have referred to an actual bodily experience. It is thus justified to interpret the letters, in particular the one discussing *Josephsehe*, as alluding to Luther’s excitement before his first sexual experience with a woman. With the expression “as is accustomed to happen” in the letter to von Amsdorf, Luther not only revealed that he was familiar with the feeling taking over a bridegroom but that he was living those emotions in the same way as any other man and husband-to-be. He thus connected concrete physical sensations with his formulation of what it generally meant to be a man getting married, but he also practiced male bonding in a rather physical way with his new reference group.

After an arguably successful consummation, Luther wrote about the realization of the marriage to his friends. By using an eloquent euphemism of the sex act, he told Leonard Koppe: “I have been woven into the braids of my girl (*ich meiner Metzen in die Zöpfe geflochten bin*).”<sup>25</sup> The euphemism, as Lyndal Roper has clai-

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21 WA BR 3, no. 900, 541, 3–4. To Nikolaus von Amsdorf (June 21, 1525). “...antequam ora cogerer audire tumultuosa in me, sicut solet fieri.”

22 See Karant-Nunn 1997, 9–13.

23 Karant-Nunn 1997, 13.

24 Roper 2016, 279–280.

25 WA BR 3, no. 894, 6–7. To Leonard Koppe (June 17, 1525.)

med, was meant to be a male joke about the sexual power of the woman.<sup>26</sup> Luther told Nikolaus von Amsdorf straightforwardly that he had been joined together (*subito copulatum*) with von Bora.<sup>27</sup> The word *copulatus* included the idea that the marriage was pronounced valid, but it also spoke to the verification of the bond in the marital bed.<sup>28</sup> Luther and von Bora were thus united not only by word but also by deed.<sup>29</sup> With this formality of sexual intercourse, witnessed by Justus Jonas, Luther joined in the Catholic tradition of *copula carnalis*.<sup>30</sup>

The sexual consummation (*copula carnalis*) of a relationship had been a debated matter in canon law. Peter Lombard (1096–1164), for instance, had regarded Mary and Joseph as an example of a marriage consummated by verbal agreement without sexual intercourse. In Lombard's view, an adult couple without impediments, promising themselves each other freely and in good faith, had been validly wed, and therefore the marriage was also sacramentally sealed *per verba*. On the other hand, following the understanding of Gratian,<sup>31</sup> the Church's position was that *copula carnalis* was nevertheless needed to seal the marriage sacramentally, or otherwise the marriage remained incomplete.<sup>32</sup>

In Germanic law, cohabitation and sexual intercourse had been seen as signs of marriage and hence of shared property rights and legal guardianship.<sup>33</sup> Mia Korpiola has paid attention to the difference of consummation (*copula carnalis de facto*) and the symbolic consummation of a marriage, that is, bedding (*copula carnalis de jure*). As she has noted: "...in the old Germanic lands of France and Germany, for example, bedding retained its significant role as a legal act determining the creation of the property consequences of marriage."<sup>34</sup> The custom of putting the bride and the

26 Roper 2016, 280.

27 WA BR 3, no. 900, 541, 3–4. To Nikolaus von Amsdorf (June 21, 1525). "...me esse cum Catharina subito copulatum..." Thomas Fudge has justified the presumption of Luther's intercourse from June 13, 1525 onwards by using Luther's statement from a treatise written in 1530, which does not, however, explicitly tell of Luther's own experiences, unlike letters such as the one to von Amsdorf. See Fudge 2003, 332.

28 It is possible that *copulatus* was performed somewhat according to the medieval, Catholic liturgy. Luther did not compose his own instructions to pastors concerning the wedding ritual until 1529. For the Catholic liturgy and Luther's *Booklet of Advice for Simple Pastors*, see Karant-Nunn 1997, 9–16.

29 As the editor of WA points out, Luther was a legally married man from June 13 onwards and hence entitled to intercourse. WA BR 3, no. 895, 535, fn.4.

30 Oberman 1982, 297–298; Smith 1999, 757.

31 There is very little information concerning Gratian at hand, apart from the knowledge that he was a jurist living in the 12th century. His work *The Decretum of Gratian*, compiled around 1140, was the first part of canon law's six legal text collections. For more on the *Decretum*, see Brundage 1987, 229–255.

32 Ozment 1983, 26; Brundage 1987, 235–236, 264; Lind 2008, 126.

33 Ozment 1983, 26.

34 Korpiola 2009, 66.

groom in bed together as a means of defining marriage in Germanic tradition was thus essential, with the ritual being more important than the actual consummation.<sup>35</sup>

Luther continued to formulate his stance toward marital sexuality and to practice male bonding in the aftermath of his own wedding. A particularly interesting address considering male bonding in Luther's new life "in the flesh" can be found in his letter to Spalatin from December 1525, which he wrote on account of Spalatin's marriage that was to take place later that month with Katharina Streubel or Heidenreich.<sup>36</sup> Luther was not able to attend the wedding, but he promised Spalatin that on his wedding night, when Spalatin was to love his wife, Luther would make love to his own "in your memory and I recall you equally to beget [at the same time] (*in tui memoriam et tibi par pari referam*)."<sup>37</sup>

Lyndal Roper has treated this particular letter as one of Luther's attempts to distance himself from his friendship with Spalatin. It is possible that Luther's offer to have sex simultaneously with Spalatin was merely "sweetening the pill," as Roper has put it, in an attempt to moderate his lack of attendance at Spalatin's wedding.<sup>38</sup> I would nevertheless suggest that, on a general level, Luther was using physicality as a means to strengthen the male bond. Therefore, the interesting question from my point of view is not the role of Luther's statement in relation with Spalatin *per se*, but the way in which Luther presented sexual intercourse as a medium to maintain the male relationship, and what it says about his understanding of the male self.

According to Karras: "...they [late medieval men] did not define themselves by their relation to women as much as by their relation to other men."<sup>39</sup> This seems to hold true regarding Luther and his bonding with other newlywed husbands. I suggest that on the whole, one of the reasons behind the transition in Luther's life—namely, the decision to marry in the first place—had to do with his masculinity and, more specifically, *the need to construct his masculinity anew*. This motive is certainly connected with all of the political, religious, and personal reasons that modern scholars have given to explain the quite sudden change in Luther's life.

As I have demonstrated in Chapter IV, Luther regarded virility, strength, and self-control—all of which were components of the proper model of clerical masculinity—as part of his masculinity before his marriage. In this way, he followed the theoretical dichotomies between women and men of his day. In the early 1520s, his discussion was deeply rooted in the polemic regarding clerical marriage.

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35 Korpiola 2009, 60–65.

36 WA BR 3, no. 952, 634. To Georg Spalatin (December 6, 1525); Roper 2010, 293. Unfortunately, none of Spalatin's letters to Luther have survived. Roper 2010, 288.

37 WA BR 3, no. 952, 634, 26–28. To Georg Spalatin (December 6, 1525). Oberman calls this part of the letter an erotic passage. Oberman 1982, 290.

38 Roper 2010, 292–293.

39 Karras 2003, 11.

But while he had bonded first with other celibate monks and pastors, using different rhetorical means until his wedding, in the new situation the bonding needed to be redirected toward a different social group. His own marriage thus placed him as a part of a wider crowd of married men instead of clerics only.

Now Luther not only spoke of the inevitable, God-given nature of human sexuality, and the importance to fulfill it in marriage, but he also practiced what he preached.<sup>40</sup> In spite of his momentary hesitation, it seems that strength and virility belonged to his self-understanding after marriage as well. Being able to bond with other married men vis-à-vis a newlywed's emotions or marital sex can be thus seen as one of Luther's expressions as he began to number himself among husbands and *Hausväter*. How the reconstruction of his masculinity continued shall be explored below, but before that focus is put on Luther's discussion about von Bora's femininity.

## 2. FROM OTHERNESS TO DOMINANCE: KATHARINA VON BORA

What was the role that Katharina von Bora played in Luther's depiction of their marriage? Describing only his own feelings, in a letter to Wenzel Linck, for example, Luther presented his marriage as a surprise, not the least to himself: "While I was thinking other things, God threw me marvelously into marriage with Katharina von Bora (*Catharina Borensi*), that nun (*moniali illa*)."<sup>41</sup> The same can be found in a letter to Hans von Dolzig, where Luther presented yet again his wonder about the events preceding this invitation to his wedding.<sup>42</sup>

Calling von Bora "that nun," I would argue, did not have so much value regarding information about von Bora's former status as it did as a means of reducing her significance as a person. Some of Luther's letters from 1525 dealing with his marriage even lack von Bora's name entirely, including the aforementioned letter to Koppe. Luther's wedding invitations to John Rühel, John Thür, and Kaspar Müller,<sup>43</sup> or to Spalatin,<sup>44</sup> for instance, contain no mention of von Bora, and neither does the letter to Michael Stifel,<sup>45</sup> wherein Luther informed him of the marriage.

An interesting exception is the other letter to Koppe from June 1525 (of the two extant ones). The text describes von Bora as "my lord Katharina (*mein herr Ca-*

40 Luther noted this himself in letter to von Amsdorf. WA BR 3, no. 900, 541, 6. To Nikolaus von Amsdorf (June 21, 1525). Hellmut Zschoch has taken this as an almost catechetical notion: "Luther hatte die Ehe gelobt und sie theologisch begründet, aber in ihr zu leben, war etwas ganz anderes, das musste auch er erst lernen." Zschoch 2001, 147–148. See also Lindberg 1996, 101.

41 WA BR 3, no. 896, 536, 9–10. To Wenzel Linck (June 20, 1525).

42 WA BR 3, no. 897, 537–538. To Hans von Dolzig (June 21, 1525).

43 WA BR 3, no. 890, 531. To Johann Rühel, Johann Thür, and Kaspar Müller (June 15, 1525).

44 WA BR 3, no. 899, 540. To Georg Spalatin (June 21, 1525).

45 WA BR 3, no. 895, 535–536. To Michael Stifel (June 17?, 1525).

terin),”<sup>46</sup> which is among the names that Luther used for her, but, with the exception of this letter, not until January 1527.<sup>47</sup> Compared to the way in which von Bora was discussed in other letters in June 1525—or, more precisely, the way she was left out—it appears that this letter was not written by Luther himself.<sup>48</sup> It is, of course, possible that even though Luther did not write this way himself, he may have given instructions of how it should be written to someone else and thereafter approved of its sending in this particular form. However, the exclusion of von Bora or her treatment as an other compared to male salience comes up so strongly in the other letters that it is rather impossible to picture Luther as addressing von Bora as his lord at this point.

When discussing Luther as a composer of letters, Roper has pointed out:

Always carefully crafted and mostly written with an eye to a public beyond the ostensible correspondent, Luther’s letters were strategic masterpieces. We can learn almost as much from what Luther forgets and omits, and from his silences, as we can from what he says.<sup>49</sup>

Even though Roper’s statement is bold, there may well be a grain of truth in it. Following the premise of Roper’s idea, there was a certain significance for Luther to treat von Bora in the way described above. Several colleagues and acquaintances, not to mention Luther’s critics, regarded the marriage as harmful for the evangelical movement, and even as a death blow for Luther’s mission.<sup>50</sup> As Jeanette Smith has noted, Philipp Melanchthon, for instance, feared that the company of the ex-nuns of Nimbschen had blurred Luther’s thoughts, or even aroused him. Gossip surrounded Luther and von Bora, suggesting that Katharina had charmed Martin with her beauty and her upper-class origin, or that Katharina was already pregnant during the wedding.<sup>51</sup> In addition to these prejudices, the marriage of a former nun and monk was still such an exception in German society that it alone was enough to raise controversy.<sup>52</sup>

46 WA BR 3, no. 898, 539, 7. To Leonard Koppe (June 21, 1525).

47 WA BR 4, no. 1066, 149, 2–3. To Johann Agricola (January 1, 1527). “*domina et hera mea Ketha*.” The next, similar wording can be found from WA BR 5, no. 1450, 118, 11–12. To Christian Beyer (July 18, 1529). “*Jch, mein herr Kethe vnd alle grussen ewr liebe Heua, Barbara, Christannum, Jsabellam, vnser geuattern freundlich*.”

48 The editor of the text has made the same conclusion. See the editor’s discussion of the letter in Bebermeyer 1933, 538. Kirsi Stjerna, on the other hand, has claimed that Luther did refer to his wife as “*Herr Kethe*” in June 1525, in a letter to Spalatin. She has referred to letters no. 892, 900, and 911, of which none contain such an address. I have not been able to find any June letter to Spalatin containing the aforementioned address. I believe Stjerna is actually referring to the unauthentic letter number 898 to Koppe.

49 Roper 2010, 294.

50 Fudge 2003, 333–335; Trepp 2014, 301.

51 Smith 1999, 757. See also Roper 2016, 279.

52 Oberman 1982, 292; Plummer 2012, 91–92. Plummer states that between 1523 and 1525, almost 200 evangelically influenced monks and priests married. For the polemic regarding former nuns and monks, see especially chapter “‘Nothing More than Common Whores and Knaves’: Married Nuns and Monks in the Early German Reformation,” 131–166.



It is possible that Luther used a certain strategy, which included omitting von Bora's name, when telling his friends and acquaintances of his marriage. Luther often used an honorific, a nickname, or a euphemism to allude to third persons in his letters, as was the custom of the day. Still, it is not a sufficient reason to explain Luther's silence, especially since in his letters the references to third persons were as often also made by their actual names. One key to understand the discursive downplaying of von Bora can be found in considering the triangle of woman, man, and God, and especially male agency in relation to female otherness.

To regard the man as active and the woman as passive was not only a continuum in relation to Luther's predecessors and the contemporary climate, but it was also current in his earlier thinking, discussed in the previous chapters. The exegesis concerning women and men which he made in the *Sermons on Genesis* on the basis of the first chapters of Genesis, for example, started with the premise that men were entitled, and obligated, to be the active decision-makers within the society, including the household. The female ideal, on the other hand, was the obedient wife under the control of her husband, with only few exceptions, like Katharina Schütz Zell.

In a sermon from 1525, Luther stressed that the wife should be "timid, subordinate, and obedient," regarding her husband as her master. This signified, of course, the ideal of the woman's willingness to consent passively to her husband's rule.<sup>53</sup> By referring to Scripture, Luther noted that since the woman had not been created from the man's head, she could not rule him either.<sup>54</sup> A prime example of the gender system for Luther was the biblical pair Abraham and Sarah. His admiration of the couple had been presented already in *On Monastic Vows*, as noted in Chapter II.2, and later he came to use them as an example in his *Small Catechism* in the following way: "Wives are subordinated to their men as to the Lord, just as Sarah was obedient to Abraham and called him [her] Lord..."<sup>55</sup>

In Luther's own case, therefore, it is possible that the question was about giving the public—that is, all the possible recipients of his letters—whether consciously or unconsciously, a picture of the supremacy of Luther's act vis-à-vis the person of the woman he chose to marry. Thus, the key factor was Luther's act of faith, not the identity of his wife. As such, the case is similar to Luther's emphasis on motherhood, which I discussed in Chapter III.2. In the beginning of the 1520s, Luther regarded the performance of motherhood, not the person of the mother, as most important. This explained the tension between the glorification of motherhood, on the one hand, and the irrelevancy of the survival of an individual mother in childbirth, on the other. The same kind of interpretation was made in the case

53 WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 26. *Marital Estate*.

54 Ibid. Luther cited to Eph. 5:22 and Col. 3:18.

55 WA 30<sup>l</sup>, 335a. *Small Catechism*.

of the stubborn wife, in which case wifehood, not a particular person as the wife, was of importance. In the case of Luther's marriage, the pattern of thinking seems similar, with the key aspect being the act performed, not the (female) person with whom it was done. In a way, all of these discussions mirror Luther's remarks concerning Eve in paradise: she was replaceable while Adam was not. All of these examples present the man as the norm and the woman as the other, and thus they highlight the patriarchal premise and gender hierarchy.

The idea of the triangle of God, male, and female contained within it a Pauline basis, found already in Luther's writings in the early 1520s. The crux of the matter was the idea of God (or Christ) as the head of man and man as the head of woman.<sup>56</sup> Whereas Luther stressed his agency in relation to von Bora, he diminished it in relation to the workings of God by wondering how God threw him into marriage. Luther's effort to stress God's role in his decision to marry could thus have functioned as a justification of the act and underlined the evangelical conviction of marriage as the proper way of living for every Christian. The emphasis reduced Luther's own role and responsibility, and it framed God as the key agent, whose will Luther had no choice but to follow.

Luther expressly alluded to his marriage as an act of faith, not lust, by putting God's agency first in his rhetoric.<sup>57</sup> This justification is also evident in his letter to von Amsdorf in June 1525, in which Luther acknowledged having neither burning nor passionate love (*nec amo nec aestuo*) for von Bora, even as he admitted to cherishing (*diligo*) her.<sup>58</sup> Luther argued for the purity of marital love on a general level a few years later in the treatise *On Marriage Matters*, noting that "the bridal love should ... expel every other evil love of the flesh (*so doch die braut liebe solt ... vertreiben alle ander boese liebe des fleisches*)..."<sup>59</sup> Denying physical attraction and arguing for the morality of marriage was a very common defense used by several reformers—Katharina Schütz Zell and Justus Jonas among them—when under suspicion regarding their motives to marry.<sup>60</sup> Marriage had also been defended by using, for example, Trinitarian images of the love of the family since at least the fourteenth century. Thus, the phenomenon to credit marriage as even a holy estate was not a new,<sup>61</sup> but it was nevertheless accentuated with greater intensity among the evangelicals, as has become clear in the discussions of this study.

56 I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23.

57 The same notion is made in Karant-Nunn 2008, 176; Roper 2016, 276.

58 WA BR 3, no. 900, 541, 4–8. To Nikolaus von Amsdorf (June 21, 1525). For a short analysis of the Latin verbs, see Hendrix 2000, 343.

59 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 230. *On Marriage Matters*.

60 Plummer 2012, 136, 138–139. For a contemporary description, see, for instance, Katharina Schütz Zell's apology *Entschuldigung Katharina Schützin/ für Matthes Zellen/ jren Eegemahel/ ... Von wegen grosser lügen uff jn erdiecht* (1524) for her husband and their marriage. Schütz Zell 1999 (1524), 15–20 (introduction by Elsie Anne McKee), 21–47 (text).

61 See, e.g., Davis 2011.

Luther's willingness to credit von Bora as the initiator in their marriage plans—which could be regarded as unusual, since Luther most often underlined his active role vis-à-vis women—could also be seen as a means for him to reduce his role and, consequently, suspicions concerning his motives.<sup>62</sup> This seems to contradict, however, the idea introduced above that Luther regarded his act of faith as important and von Bora's person, roughly put, as irrelevant. I believe Luther was inconsistent in this matter. In some contexts, his best interests were served by the representation of himself as a true Christian who acted boldly in faith when marrying. In other contexts, he stressed not only von Bora's initiative but that of God, and his own role as passive and obedient to God's will.

Luther's intention was thus not to underpin von Bora or her authority but to present himself in as good light as possible. His way of treating women as others, compared to male subjectivity and the primary nature of male experience, thus does not seem to exclude his wife, at least not in the beginning of their common life. Concerning his wedding and the first steps of his marriage, Luther was concentrated on his own experience; in his letters he left his wife out of the picture, or he alluded to von Bora only occasionally. Being the man, Luther himself was at the center of discussion, while the woman was put aside as in Luther's theoretical writings.

Quite soon, however, von Bora's name became a frequent part of Luther's personal letters. From December 1525 to August 1526, Luther defined von Bora as "my rib" (*mea costa*) in a few of his letters.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Luther included his wife's greetings in his letters frequently, beginning this habit in August 1526, usually in the form "my Ketha salutes you (*salutat te mea Ketha*),"<sup>64</sup> and sometimes adding "respectfully (*reverenter*)."<sup>65</sup> Only two of the salutations by the end of 1530 are in German,<sup>66</sup> and the rest are in Latin, the language of correspondence between Luther and his close associates and friends.<sup>67</sup> In addition, the official name "Catharina," which Luther had used in mid-1525, changed to a chatty "Ketha," "Katene,"

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62 Roper 2016, 276.

63 WA BR 3, no. 952, 635. To Georg Spalatin (December 6, 1525); WA BR 4, no. 988, 40. To Nikolaus Hausmann (March 24, 1526); WA BR 4, no. 1016, 86. To Nikolaus Hausmann (June 2, 1526); WA BR 4, no. 1032, 109. To Michael Stifel (August 11, 1526).

64 E.g. 1043, 1048, 1122, 1156, 1387, 1544.

65 In total, nine letters by the end of 1530: 1045, 1072, 1338, 1342, 1357, 1458, 1491, 1527, 1530.

66 WA BR 12, no. 4233 (= 1420a), 103, 18–19. To Georg Schiltel (May 17, 1529); WA BR 5, no. 1450, 118, 11–12. To Christian Beyer (July 18, 1529).

67 Of the specific recipients, Nikolaus Hausmann is among those to whom considerably many salutations are addressed. It is noteworthy since he was by far not the one with whom Luther corresponded the most. For the letters to Hausmann, see, e.g., WA BR 4, no. 1045, 125 (October 29, 1526); WA BR 4, no. 1072, 159 (January 10, 1527); WA BR 4, no. 1166, 277 (November 7, 1527); WA BR 5, no. 1387, 26–27 (March 3, 1529); WA BR 5, no. 1527, 237 (Early February, 1530).

or “Kethe.”<sup>68</sup> Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks have considered that Luther’s way of referring to von Bora in his letters was his way of “reconciling his inner circle to his wife.”<sup>69</sup> This is undoubtedly the case, although I would limit this assumption to letters dated from 1526 onwards.

As has been noted in Chapter III, referring to the wife as the man’s rib was used by Luther as a part of male discourse already before his own marriage. Nonetheless, even if it was merely a social convention, the reference maintained the discourse and the climate that presumed man as normative and placed woman under the dominion of man. On the other hand, the nicknames “my rib” or “my Ketha,” among others, certainly sent a signal to Luther’s friends about the adoption of his new status as a husband; in other words, Luther performed his gender role as a male by the way in which he treated his wife in his letters.

Nevertheless, as swiftly as von Bora’s name became a regular feature of Luther’s personal letters, she also began to be represented as a dominant figure. A few of the nicknames given by Luther to von Bora in the letters to his friends were “my lady and mistress (*domina et hera mea*)”<sup>70</sup>, “my lord (*mein herr/dominus meus*)”<sup>71</sup>, and “my empress (*imperiatrix mea*).”<sup>72</sup> Luther simultaneously showed his affection toward his wife in letters addressed to von Bora herself with quite similar wordings. In these texts she was represented as “my friendly and dear Lord (*meinem freundlichen lieben Herrn*)”<sup>73</sup> or “my beloved wife (*meiner herzlieben haußfrauen*).”<sup>74</sup> The pun, which represented a reversal of gender roles and thus the wife as the head of the household, did not only concern Luther’s own marriage but was used by him in at least two letters to allude to his colleagues’ wives as well.<sup>75</sup> The reversal is a theme which one can find in contemporary woodcuts as well. It seems that Luther’s position as a *Hausvater* justified his participation in this particular type of humor more than before.

These kinds of puns were, according to Karant-Nunn, humor by means of which Luther revealed his understanding of himself as a husband. Karant-Nunn has called the Luther’s relationship “an asymmetrical joking relationship,”<sup>76</sup> which implies a relationship in which one has the right to tease the other, who in turn does not tease him/her back, or teases him/her to a notably lesser degree. Ka-

68 For the nicknames as allegories, see Zschoch 2001, 156.

69 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 186.

70 WA BR 4, no. 1066, 149, 2–3. To Johann Agricola (January 1, 1527).

71 WA BR 5, no. 1450, 118, 11. To Christian Beyer (July 18, 1529); WA BR 5, no. 1491, 174, 18. To Friedrich Myconius (November 7, 1529).

72 WA BR 5, no. 1527, 237, 19. To Nikolaus Hausmann (February 1530).

73 WA BR 5, no. 1476, 154, 1. To Katharina Luther (October 4, 1529).

74 WA BR 5, no. 1713, 608, 1. To Katharina Luther (September 8, 1530).

75 See WA BR 4, no. 1253, 442, 2. To Stephan Roth (April 12, 1528); WA BR 5, no. 1757, 692, 19. To Wenzel Linck (December 1, 1530). The letter to Roth is analyzed in section VI.3.

76 Karant-Nunn 2008, 180. Charlotte Methuen has also noted the irony in Luther’s wordings. See Methuen 2014, 24.

rant-Nunn uses this idea, which has its roots in anthropological research, to draw Luther's character as a man and husband. The nicknames and honorifics of von Bora were thus "epistolary jousts," with which Luther recognized von Bora's noble background and his own ancestry of lower social status. Moreover, they were Luther's way of implying that their household arrangements were not restricted in terms of women's and men's work, responsibilities, and preferences, which in practice gave von Bora authority that in theory would have belonged to Luther.<sup>77</sup> Luther's experience of marital life on a very personal level allowed him to engage in such humor.<sup>78</sup> Alternatively, it is possible that the honorifics had little to do with real life in the Luther's household or with Luther's view of gender relations—perhaps by joking about his wife's position, he just seemingly gave her a leading role.<sup>79</sup>

An interesting and highly important fact is that the honorifics he used were of two different categories: in the masculine and in the feminine.<sup>80</sup> Honorifics in the feminine, such as *domina*, *hera*, and *imperiatrix*, can be interpreted as referring to von Bora's status as *Hausfrau*. These nicknames put von Bora beside *Hausherr* Luther and implied her position of authority as the lady of the house vis-à-vis all those who were socially below her. They do not have to be read as placing von Bora above Luther. Rather, they seem to speak to Luther's idea of von Bora as his female companion, who is at the end of the day was bound to the gender system.

Honorifics in the masculine, on the contrary, seem to hold a meaning beyond the status of *Hausfrau*. Accordingly, the terms *Herr* and *dominus* seem to allude to relations of power particularly between Luther and von Bora.<sup>81</sup> The connotations attached to the concept *Herr* even suggest a relationship between God and the lower classes from the point of view of late medieval social order. It is possible, on the other hand, that the matter is similar to that presented by Luther in the *Sermons on Genesis*, where he depicted woman as lord (*ein Herr*) above all other creatures, but man as the one who ultimately had dominion over all.

I do not believe that the question is that simple, though, as Luther did not allude in any way to his supremacy in the letters. This is even more noteworthy, considering that Luther consciously chose masculine nouns instead of feminine ones. It thus appears as if he treated von Bora as one who was well above his own

77 Karant-Nunn 2008, 179–181.

78 For notions of joking in Luther's marriage, see also Roper 2016, 280.

79 I thank Dr. Mary J. Streufert for discussing the possible interpretations with me. Pondering of the connection between Luther's language and the historical reality is, of course, part of the general historiographical questions concerning the relationship of language and reality. For this, see, e.g., Certeau 1988; Canning 1994; Barrera 2001; and Salmesvuori 2014, 20 and the literature cited there.

80 Karant-Nunn treats them as similar; see Karant-Nunn 2008, 181. The masculine form of honorifics is, however, briefly noted in Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 9.

81 This is suggested also in Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 9.

social status, and thereby he alluded to her upper-class origins, as Karant-Nunn has suggested. Furthermore, to amplify Karant-Nunn's evaluation of von Bora's adopting of masculine authority in practical life, I believe this becomes evident specifically in the masculine honorifics, not so much in the feminine ones.

According to Diarmaid MacCulloch, former nuns in the sixteenth century were usually much higher than their husbands in social rank, as they often came from noble families, and thus felt it appropriate to put their husbands "in their place from time to time."<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, it was not only nuns who practiced significantly different ways of being than the official gender system would have allowed, but also women of different social backgrounds and characteristics; as examples of these, MacCulloch highlights Katharina Schütz Zell and Wibrandis Rosenblatt (1504–1564).<sup>83</sup> Von Bora's self-awareness and influence on Luther has been noted by a host of Reformation scholars. Smith has summarized the modern view of von Bora by noting: "Katharina's industry and strong personality, as reflected in Luther's letters and recorded conversations, are well known."<sup>84</sup> Zschoch has described von Bora in a similar fashion, remarking on the influence she had on Luther's life's work.<sup>85</sup> Although the full extent of von Bora's impact cannot be judged on the basis of the letters during the period of study here, it is evident that her role was, for example, that of an intermediate between Luther and his colleagues on various occasions, even from the beginning of their marriage.<sup>86</sup> In addition, her influence on Luther should not be underestimated in terms of his making the decision to marry in the first place.

Of course, the dynamics of a married couple are dictated by an intersection of factors besides gender, such as social background, age, and the individual character of the spouses, to name but a few. The dynamics are also subject to change by virtue of the passing of time and differing situations in which roles are negotiated and renegotiated.<sup>87</sup> Such was the case with the Luther couple as well. One of the obvious reasons for allowing von Bora a very different position than other women, beside her personal character, was for Luther's own benefit. As Karant-Nunn has

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82 MacCulloch 2003, 649.

83 Ibid., 649–650.

84 Smith 1999, 746.

85 Zschoch 2001, 147. Katharina von Bora's position as Luther's wife as well as her personality—as it is filtered through Luther's writings—has sometimes led to an emphasizing her significance as the lady of the Reformation. Arguably, she is one of the best-known women of the Reformation era, not the least because of the widely-spread double portraits of her and Luther, painted by Lucas Cranach the Elder. For the different portrayals of her, see, e.g., Smith 1999, 745; Stjerna 2009, 52.

86 See, for instance, WA BR 5, no. 1476, 154. To Katharina Luther (October 4, 1529); WA BR 5, no. 1682, 544. To Katharina Luther (August 14, 1530); WA BR 5, no. 1713, 608. To Katharina Luther (September 8, 1530).

87 A somewhat similar notion is found in Wunder 2002, 35.

suggested: “He could tolerate a discrepancy between ideal and necessity when that disparity liberated him to fulfill his role as intellectual and public figure.”<sup>88</sup>

Even though Luther was most likely joking at von Bora’s expense from time to time, the honorifics which he used tell something of the reality of their household arrangement, where the man’s leading role was not always a *sine qua non*. Furthermore, to broaden Karant-Nunn’s statement regarding Luther’s benefit, it could be said that when it served his best interest, Luther was willing to widen his norm of the proper female way of being, not only in his wife’s case but in regard to other women as well. This has become evident already in the discussions on contemporary women in Chapter III.3.

The next section will look more closely at the gendered roles of Luther and von Bora in their everyday life. This is done by exploring how Luther treated parenting in their own household, and what these discussions reveal of his views on the gendered body and the gender system.

### 3. LUTHER THE FATHER, VON BORA THE BEARER

Luther became a father for the first time in June 7, 1526, when his son Johannes was born.<sup>89</sup> Luther wrote to John Rühel the next day: “Could you tell Mister Eisleben [i.e. John Agricola] on my behalf that my dear Kethe, of God’s great mercy, has delivered Hans Luther yesterday at two o’clock...”<sup>90</sup> From the point of view of Luther’s masculinity, the last lines of the letter are of the most importance, as they reveal Luther’s bonding with other men in a similar situation:

And thus he [Agricola] would not wonder that I have let [you] rush to him with such an order, [for] about this time of year he should think what it could be to have a son. Salutations to Your dear son-bearer (*Sonntregerin*) and Eisleben’s [Agricola’s] Else.<sup>91</sup>

Luther thus created a bond between Rühel, Agricola, and himself, with the common denominator being fatherhood to a son. The same male bonding emerges in a letter to Wenzel Linck, as well as in one to Spalatin, in which Luther wished them the same experience of fathering a son.<sup>92</sup> The emphasis of being a father to a baby boy profoundly connected Luther to the group of *Hausväter*, as he had succeeded in one of the most important duties of a married man: begetting offspring.<sup>93</sup> A boy held additional value, as the honorific *Sonntregerin* reveals.

88 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 20.

89 Smith 1999, 749.

90 WA BR 4, no. 1017, 87, 6–8. To Johann Rühel (June 8, 1526).

91 WA BR 4, no. 1017, 87, 9–12. To Johann Rühel (June 8, 1526).

92 WA BR 4, no. 1019, 89, 7–9. To Georg Spalatin (June 17, 1526); WA BR 4, no. 1024, 96, 6. To Wenzel Linck (June 29, 1526).

93 For the importance of fathering for men during the late Middle Ages, see Karras 2003, 16–17. For the importance of fathering for Protestant men, see Karant-Nunn 2012b, 254.

Luther had taught in a sermon in 1523 that “a girl is a minor good work, a boy a great and more powerful work, who has less uncleanness.”<sup>94</sup> By uncleanness Luther arguably referred to the text of Leviticus, which specifies the time for a woman’s purification after giving birth.<sup>95</sup> However, the quotation also reveals Luther’s stance toward the sexes from the very beginning of human life. Compared to boys, girls were of lesser value. Whether the concept of “good work” referred to the pleasure of God on account of childbirth or that of the husband, or perhaps that of society as a whole, remains unclear. Probably it referred to the pleasure of all of the above.

In the first place, the sixteenth century’s system of patrilineage made a male heir highly prized for any parent.<sup>96</sup> The importance of a boy can be read, for instance, in *Rosengarten*, the first printed manual for midwives by Eucharius Rösslin, published in 1513. Rösslin regarded that one of the best ways to comfort a mother in labor was to convince her that she was going to give birth to a boy.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, midwives were usually paid more for assistance in the delivery of a boy.<sup>98</sup> The importance and expectancy of a son becomes clear, albeit implicitly, in a letter by Elisabeth of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (1510–1558), Luther’s contemporary. When rejoicing about her first grandchild in a letter to her son-in-law Albert of Prussia in June 1551, Elisabeth had a need to justify the goodness of the birth of a baby girl to Albert and Elisabeth’s daughter Anna Maria, doing this in relation to a baby boy. According to Elisabeth, “a pious girl is always better than an unsuccessful boy. Everything that God gives is good.”<sup>99</sup> This justification is in line with the notion of Wiesner-Hanks, according to whom women’s letters occasionally included apologies for giving birth to a baby girl.<sup>100</sup>

The common expectation of the Luther’s first child, conceived by a former monk and a former nun, was that it could be a monster or even the Antichrist himself.<sup>101</sup> In addition to joy about his son’s birth, Hans’s wellbeing was an equally important theme in Luther’s short notices. Refuting all fears and suspicions, Lut-

94 WA 12, 423. Sermon on the Purification of the Virgin.

95 Lev. 12:2, 4–5: “If a woman conceive seed, and bear a man-child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of the impurity of her sickness shall she be unclean. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled. But if she bear a maid-child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her impurity; and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.” For a short discussion on churching in the Reformation Era, see Wiesner-Hanks 2010a, 150–152.

96 Karras 2003, 165–166.

97 Ozment 1983, 101, 108.

98 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 57. Even wet nurses could be selected on the basis of whether they had delivered a baby boy, as high medieval medical sources suggest. See MacLehose 1996, 13.

99 Elisabeth von Braunschweig-Lüneburg 1954 (1551), 132. For bibliographical essays on Elisabeth, see, for instance, Stjerna 2009, 96–108; Domröse 2011, 101–112.

100 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 57.

101 Oberman 1982, 292–293; Smith 1999, 749.



her informed that his newborn was “healthy and vigorous (*sano & integro*).”<sup>102</sup> The Latin adjective *integer* could also be translated as “complete” or “uninjured,” and thus this particular wording reveals the worry about Hans’s illness or even monstrosity, which had proven to be unnecessary.

The baby’s health could be at stake not only because of the religious background of his parents, but also due to his prenatal exposure to several dangers. The latter was a threat faced by every fetus, as was commonly believed. Based on the views of ancient and medieval philosophers and medical writers, sixteenth-century people regarded that a child’s physical condition depended on the mother’s wellbeing and was at stake, as it were, from the moment of conception.<sup>103</sup> As Ulinka Rublack has noted, during pregnancy “the borders between women’s inner body and the outer world were thin.”<sup>104</sup> The mother’s state of mind, including emotions such as anger, or her exposure to frightening situations, diseases, and even unexpected good news could harm the fetus. Moreover, the fetus was affected by various outer circumstances and experiences. For instance, beautiful art around the mother was believed to affect the child’s beauty. Abuse or too frequent sexual intercourse, among other factors, posed a threat of miscarriage. If the mother saw a rabbit, the child could become hare-lipped.<sup>105</sup> The mother’s womb itself was, according to male writers, a potentially dangerous environment for the fetus, since the menstrual blood that surrounded it could quite easily cause harm.<sup>106</sup>

Even though the health of the newborn was often the key factor after childbirth, the wellbeing of the mother was also a matter to be taken care of.<sup>107</sup> Luther dealt with von Bora’s bodily state specifically in connection with her pregnancies and childbirths. The first reference can be found in the letter to John Rühel, discussed above, wherein Luther alluded to von Bora’s physical state after labor: “Now [after writing] these letters the sick Kethe urges me.”<sup>108</sup> Women were entrusted to the care of their husbands both during pregnancy and after childbirth. The care was supposed to be not only physical and practical but also mentally supportive. The husband could be barred from the birth itself, but his involvement in the care before and afterwards was an expectation that could hardly be ignored.<sup>109</sup> Noting

102 WA BR 4, no. 1018, 88, 6. To Nikolaus Hausmann (June 13, 1526). The state of affairs continued more or less as such. See WA BR 4, no. 1111, 210, 14. To Johann Agricola (June 10, 1527?).

103 Ozment 1983, 101; MacLehose 1996, 5; Rublack 1996, 93.

104 Rublack 1996, 94.

105 Ozment 1983, 103, 113; Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 38; Begiato 2017, 211–212.

106 MacLehose 1996, 8–10, Rublack 1996, 94; Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 38.

107 Rublack has interestingly analyzed the importance of the physical wellbeing of the mother and child, as well as the father’s role in the process of pregnancy and delivery, in her article. See Rublack 1996.

108 WA BR 4, no. 1017, 87, 12–13. To Johann Rühel (June 8, 1526).

109 Ozment 1983, 102; Rublack 1996, 85–86, 98. Ozment has noted, however, that the role of the male physician and the father during labor grew during the 16th century. See pp. 102, 115–116.

that he had to stop writing the letter and go help von Bora instead, Luther proved that he was following the common expectations regarding the husband's obligations toward his wife.

Ten days after the delivery, in a letter to Spalatin Luther described the difficulties with the newborn while simultaneously discussing his understanding of female bodiliness:

For already the infant is troubled by such ills [of which] I do not know, or rather (as they think) by the indigestibility of the milk with which mothers, who have delivered, are compelled to feed [their babies] at the beginning.<sup>110</sup>

Another ten days later, Luther wrote to Agricola of the situation: "...the mother has thus far struggled with a shortage of milk and hitherto with difficulty a few drops have moistened his [Hans's] palate."<sup>111</sup> Thus, Luther suspected in the first part of the quotation that the milk with which von Bora was feeding Hans was the source of his ills, as he could not digest it well enough. The question seems to be first and foremost about the indigestibility of the milk, not a problem with the digestion of the newborn. In the second part of the quotation Luther revealed that von Bora could not produce enough milk for the baby's needs. He was not judging his wife but merely noting the status quo.

Breastfeeding was a matter of great importance in medieval medical writings, as William MacLehose has noted: "Every high medieval source of pediatric material contained at least some reference to, if not a detailed analysis of, the source and quality of milk."<sup>112</sup> All of the hegemonic traditions—namely, Aristotelian, Galenic, and Hippocratic—held that mother's milk was the most suitable for a baby even though it was simultaneously a source of high risk. Milk was believed to originate in menstrual blood which was transformed and purified by means of heating, coagulation, and whitening in the breasts or in the veins (depending on the theory). The milk itself was susceptible to corruption, and thus the lactating woman was advised in matters of proper diet, exercise, and emotional balance.<sup>113</sup> What is revealing from the point of view of the quotation is that mothers were not regarded as being able to transform blood into milk in their bodies "just after birth." As a matter of fact, only eight weeks after delivery were mothers expected to produce milk that was not completely impure. For this reason, a wet nurse was often regarded as vital.<sup>114</sup> Contracts with wet nurses were most often made for an extended period until weaning.<sup>115</sup>

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110 WA BR 4, no. 1019, 89, 11–12. To Georg Spalatin (June 17, 1526).

111 WA BR 4, no. 1022, 94, 9–10. To Johann Agricola (June 27, 1526).

112 MacLehose 1996, 11.

113 Ibid., 11–15.

114 Ibid., 12; Jarzebowski 2017, 215.

115 See Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 91–92. For wet nurses, particularly their relation to witchcraft, see Roper 1997, 209–214.

Luther's letters contain no explicit mention of wet nurses but speak merely of von Bora's lactation. However, his notion of milk that mothers are compelled to feed their babies during the first days after delivery suggests that the milk was not von Bora's own. It is very possible that von Bora had a wet nurse to help her in nursing during the first days and weeks. What is most interesting is that Luther nevertheless based his understanding of breastfeeding and mother's milk on the views of ancient thinkers, which were appreciated throughout the Middle Ages. The continuity of medieval views in this regard was highlighted by Luther with the notion "as they think," as he and his contemporaries applied the knowledge they had collectively inherited from earlier generations about the female body, its fluids and temperature, and the dangers it posed.

Two equally illuminating references to von Bora's body can be found from the period of von Bora's second pregnancy. Morning sickness and other inconveniences of pregnancy were obviously troubling von Bora: "My Ketha feels sick and vomits again in expectation of the second fetus."<sup>116</sup> Probably a month or so later, Luther informed Agricola of von Bora's physical state: "My Ketha vomits and feels sick, and is again in distress, of course [for her] head's and dizziness' [sake] (which I am unfamiliar with), but she is brave (as I hope) during sickness."<sup>117</sup>

Luther had discussed the troubles of pregnancy in a sermon already in January 1525, several months before his wedding, before von Bora's possible symptoms of her first pregnancy. In the sermon, he was strikingly thorough in describing the state. According to Luther's knowledge

...the wife faces great pains and illness, there is aching of the head, dizziness, then eating and drinking disgusts and terrifies her, then there often comes unusual vomiting, toothache, bloating of the legs, pains in the body. Then they often want to eat raw, unnatural things, and if they were healthy, the nature of those [foods] would terrify them.<sup>118</sup>

In von Bora's body and her way of being during the pregnancies, Luther witnessed in reality what he had theoretically already known. Worth noting is that his theoretical knowledge regarding female bodiliness was more multifaceted in 1525 than it had been in the beginning of the 1520s, when in *On Married Life* he had regarded fruitful women as altogether "fit, clean, and happy." This shift was not only due to his experience with his wife, however, since the cited passage of the sermon predates his marital life. Perhaps the growing number of marriages of his contemporaries—in 1525 all of his comrades were married, except Spalatin and von Amsdorf<sup>119</sup>—and, accordingly, pregnancies in his immediate circle had brought his attention to the more down-to-earth aspects of female bodiliness.

116 WA BR 4, no. 1100, 198, 11–12. To Wenzel Linck (c. May 4, 1527).

117 WA BR 4, no. 1111, 210, 11–14. To Johann Agricola (June 10, 1527?).

118 WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate* 1525.

119 Roper 2016, 278.

Luther discussed von Bora's second pregnancy again in a letter in November, where he remarked on the plague that was troubling people in Wittenberg and neighboring areas.<sup>120</sup> Of Luther's immediate circle, only his family and a couple of his coworkers were staying in Wittenberg, and most of his comrades had escaped the plague.<sup>121</sup> Von Bora was, as Luther put it, not only strong in spirit but had also remained physically healthy (*sana corpore*), whereas his son was perhaps infected.<sup>122</sup> A pregnant woman was often advised to absent herself from her sick children in order to keep her and the unborn safe.<sup>123</sup> Von Bora did not do this, for in the prevailing situation she would have had to leave not only her son but the whole of Wittenberg behind.

The death of Georg Rörer's wife after giving birth to a stillborn daughter in the beginning of November led Luther to explicate his fear for von Bora. He noted that he was "anxious about the delivery of my wife (*uxoris partu*)..."<sup>124</sup> Anxiety before labor was indeed a common emotion, as was fear,<sup>125</sup> even in circumstances where there was not any additional risk, such as a plague.

Everything went well, however. A month later, on December 10, a baby girl was born. Luther informed Justus Jonas on the same day:

I returned home from a lecture at the tenth hour, and I received your letter, of which [I had read] ten lines when I was simultaneously told [that] at this moment Ketha delivered a little daughter, glory and praise to Father in Heaven, amen. The woman delivered the baby (*puerpera*) is healthy but in pain. The little son Johannes is also well and happy.<sup>126</sup>

It seems that Luther had acted in the accustomed manner by not being present during childbirth, since he told that he was still entering home and reading a letter when informed of the birth of his daughter Elisabeth. Luther's discussion of his newborn son presented above, as well the joy he experienced from that, allows comparison of his thoughts beside the delivery bed of his daughter. Luther told Jakob Propst that God had exalted (*auxit*) him with a daughter, who was healthy (*sana*) and somewhat dark (*nigella*).<sup>127</sup> Elisabeth's appearance as somewhat dark alluded most probably to her physical appearance and perhaps more specifically to the color of her hair. Being exalted can be understood as an expression of joy and

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120 The plague had arrived in Wittenberg already in July. Leroux 2007, 224–225.

121 Roper 2016, 318.

122 WA BR 4, no. 1165, 276, 10–12. To Justus Jonas (November 2, 1527).

123 Ozment 1983, 113.

124 WA BR 4, no. 1168, 280, 22. To Justus Jonas (November 10?, 1527).

125 Begiato 2017, 211.

126 WA BR 4, no. 1180, 294, 1–5. To Justus Jonas (December 10, 1527). "*Hac hora decima regressus domum a lectione, tuas accipio literas, quibus ad decem versus lectis edita mihi simul hoc ipso momento filiola nuntiatur ex mea Ketha...*"

127 WA BR 4, no. 1193, 313, 8. To Jakob Propst (December 31, 1527). *Nigella* is a pre-classical and medieval word, which literally means "somewhat black."

thankfulness, somewhat similar to how Luther remarked on his son's birth. Thus, it may be that Luther regarded the birth of a boy or a girl to be of equal value.

"The Protestant cleric ... could join the laity in taking pride in the birth of each successive child," as Karant-Nunn has put it.<sup>128</sup> In the case of Elisabeth, however, Luther did not express a similar desire to bond with other fathers as he had after Hans's birth, nor did Luther, for instance, send his greetings to anyone as a "daughter-bearer." This may be due to several reasons. It is indeed possible that the birth of a girl was not an occasion for overwhelming joy, even though Luther did show thankfulness for her birth as well. Luther appears to have been pleased with a daughter; although not to the extent he would have been were it a boy.<sup>129</sup> My former discussions on Luther's idea of a baby boy as more valuable and clean would point in this direction. Another reason may be that the possible lack of overwhelming joy did not have to do with the child's sex, in the first place, but with parental attitudes to a first- and second-born in general. It would be quite human if Luther was not as enthusiastic with his second child, simply due to the fact that he had already experienced fatherhood.

However, Luther's narrative of his manhood, as well as his attachment to Elisabeth, become explicit in his discussion of Elisabeth's death, which took place approximately eight months after her birth on August 3, 1528. Luther pondered the emotional burden of his daughter's death in a letter to Nikolaus Hausmann two days later:

My little daughter, my little Elisabeth (*mea Elisabethula*), is dead. [It is] astonishing how a suffering, nearly womanly soul (*animum paene muliebre*) she has left to me, in such a way that I am shaken by tenderheartedness. Never would I have believed before [that] a fatherly soul (*paternos animos*) softens for [his] children in this way. Pray to the Lord for me, in whose name I salute you.<sup>130</sup>

Some modern studies on parenting in the late medieval period have suggested that parents hardly created emotional bonds with their children, a claim that has been strongly contested.<sup>131</sup> Luther's words prove false the idea of the lack of an emotional bond between children and parents. More importantly, Luther's remarks open up interesting prospects for a study of gendered emotions and characteristics, as he understood them. Female nature—or the soul, as Luther termed it—is described as tenderhearted and soft. This suggests that in comparison, if we apply dichotomies,

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128 Karant-Nunn 2012b, 254.

129 Karant-Nunn suggests that Luther's way of treating his children was increasingly gender-specific but not greatly until they grew older. Karant-Nunn 2012b, 250.

130 WA BR 4, no. 1303, 511, 3–7. To Nikolaus Hausmann (August 5, 1528).

131 See, e.g., Rosenwein 2002, 829–830; Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 91–93; Jarzebowski 2017, 214–215. On the whole, Rosenwein 2002 is a very good text concerning the historiography of emotion. One of the basic works on the history of emotions is Reddy 2001.

male nature would be unsympathetic and stern. I hardly believe the case was as strict as this, but it does seem that Luther was thinking of oppositions on some level. He was obviously surprised about the emotions that he experienced after Elisabeth's death; in other words, he actually seems to have been surprised about his attachment toward his children. This speaks of an ideal manhood as excluding effusions of emotion or any sign of weakness whatsoever, including emotional bonding. Was Luther also wondering more broadly about his position, where he was not the rational male, as his career at the university should have granted, and where he could no longer fulfill the ideal of the man who was not attached to earthly things, as his former gravitation toward the cloister would have suggested? Did he feel himself as weak and unmanly?

Karras has remarked that universities were places that made the difference between a man and a beast—not only or even primarily between a man and a woman. Manhood was proved by one's rationality and capability to use logic as a weapon against other men in disputations, for instance.<sup>132</sup> The monastic tradition, on the other hand, held the ideal of self-control and avoiding attachment to this world.<sup>133</sup> As regards family life, it was taken for granted that it—including fatherhood—was loaded with feelings.<sup>134</sup> Ideally a father had “loving kindness (*pietate*)” toward his offspring, and in like manner he enjoyed the loving affection of his children. As a matter of fact, fathers' softness toward their children was an acknowledged emotional state—even to the point where it became undesired from the perspective of Christian life, according to which God was always to be put first.<sup>135</sup>

Before becoming a husband and father, Luther's manhood had developed in surroundings of monastic and university ideals. The juxtaposition of rationality as manly and emotionality as womanly, and Luther's amazement of experiencing feelings he had formerly considered as merely feminine, thus becomes understandable. It is possible that Luther underwent a crisis, not only due to his daughter's death but also in relation to his view of himself as a man. In the middle of his affections, however, he was actually representing the traditional role of the father. This suggests that he was adapting his way of being in a comprehensive manner to the one expected of him as a father. That said, I do not mean to suggest that his emotions were not genuine—obviously they were sincere.

A few weeks later, Luther could share the information that von Bora was expecting their third child: “I have another daughter in uterus (*filiolam aliam habeo in utero*).”<sup>136</sup> From the point of view of Luther's masculinity and corporality in general, it is noteworthy how Luther discussed von Bora's third pregnancy. First

132 Karras 2003, 67, 89–93.

133 Karras 2003, 161.

134 Rosenwein 2002, 843; Begiato 2017, 211.

135 Rosenwein 2007, 94, 123.

136 WA BR 4, no. 1310, 541, 9–10. To Eberhard Brisger (August 28/29, 1528).

of all, von Bora was presented merely as a uterus that belonged to Luther. According to Kirsi Stjerna, “[Luther] associated her [von Bora] with the ‘matter’ rather than the ‘spirit’, applying in his own marriage an androcentric dichotomous view of humanity...”<sup>137</sup> It is not likely that Luther deeply considered this wording, and thus it is essential not to analyze one sentence too much. Luther was accustomed to express himself with euphemisms, such as, for instance, *puerpera* (literally meaning “woman in labor” or “woman who has been in the process of being delivered of child”), which he had used when writing about Elisabeth’s birth.

It has been suggested in previous research that Luther rarely employed euphemisms.<sup>138</sup> On the contrary, it seems to me that Luther did use them in certain contexts and in accordance with customs. The sentence quoted above can be interpreted as representing Luther’s understanding of gender relations and hierarchy, and for this reason it can also be taken as supporting Stjerna’s notion of androcentric dichotomy. As has been shown above, for Luther the woman was self-evidently under the dominion of man. On a general level, the wife as being part of her husband’s belongings becomes evident in Luther’s explanation of the ninth and tenth commandments in the *Large Catechism* in 1529, wherein he treated the wife similarly as the man’s other properties.<sup>139</sup> This was naturally adopted from the Old Testament, and Luther did not question it in any way. As a matter of fact, in *On Marriage Matters* he even compared the ownership of a young woman with that of a pair of shoes: just as a rascal could steal a pair of shoes, he could also steal someone’s daughter.<sup>140</sup> Self-evidently, a number of things belonged to the husband as *Hausvater*—for example, his wife and child, house and yard, goods, and honor—as both Luther’s theoretical texts and correspondence reveal. These lists are sometimes replaced by a more abbreviated notion of the man’s “body and goods (*leib und gut*).”<sup>141</sup>

As has been noted formerly in several contexts within the study, Luther’s understanding of the wife’s proper place was in line with the contemporary legal interpretation, which took patriarchy and the husband’s guardianship as a given. The woman remained in the dominion of her father until her marriage, at which point the guardianship shifted from father to husband.<sup>142</sup> Also noted in previous

137 Stjerna 2009, 61.

138 See Karant-Nunn 2008, 179.

139 WA 30<sup>I</sup>, 177. *Large Catechism*.

140 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 216. *On Marriage Matters*.

141 WA 30<sup>I</sup>, 183–184. *Large Catechism*; WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 206, 216–217, 245. *On Marriage Matters*. For Luther’s correspondence including lists of man’s temporal gifts and thus his possessions, see, e.g., WA BR 4, no. 1304a, 513. To Elector Joachim (August 8, 1528); WA BR 5, no. 1523, 226. To Elector Joachim (February 1, 1530); WA BR 5, no. 1524, 228. To the bishops of Brandenburg, Havelberg, and Lebus (February 1, 1530). For the withdrawal of the husband’s property—including the wife—as robbery (*raub*), see WA BR 5, no. 1523, 227; WA BR 5, no. 1526a, 230. To Katharina Hornung (February 1, 1530).

142 In addition to the formerly noted, see, for instance, Roper 1989, 72.

chapters is that Luther regarded Paul's words of spousal relationship as ownership of one another's bodies to be correct. The theme of the right to the other's body is still found in Luther's texts in 1530. In *On Marriage Matters*, Luther interestingly explicated this through the "loss" of the male body, noting that the man did not have power over his body (*so ist er seines leibes nicht mechtig*) when living in matrimony. The textual context for this concerned male seducers and the prohibition for men to commit adultery,<sup>143</sup> and therefore only the man's body was discussed.

All this being said, given the viewpoint of the man owning his wife, it is no wonder if Luther thought that von Bora was, in a way, his own uterus. Considering Luther's way of treating von Bora in masculine terms, which were discussed above, it is not necessary to interpret *in utero* as a euphemism that was explicitly thought of as stressing male domination. Instead, the way Luther presented the pregnancy may not have involved a more in-depth notion of the woman's position than the common idioms "my rib (*mea costa*)" or "woman in labor (*puerpera*)" in male correspondence. These kinds of discursive expressions were not meant to be any sort of declaration of male supremacy, but they tell rather of the contemporary climate. As I have noted before, statements such as this were intended to maintain the gender hierarchy as it was. All in all, due to the examples above, it would seem that Luther's overall theoretical formulations about the gender system held true for the Luther marriage as well.

The second interesting feature in the phrase "*filiolam aliam habeo in utero*" is the question of the sex of the unborn. The commentary of the WA explains Luther's comment by stating that von Bora had felt herself carrying.<sup>144</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the pregnancy was quite in the beginning, since Magdalena was born not until May 4, 1529.<sup>145</sup> Presuming also that von Bora had breastfed Elisabeth until the baby's death, it is unlikely that the conception would have taken place much earlier. It is uncertain, however, whether von Bora felt that she was carrying a girl in particular or if that was a question of Luther's wish. The editors of the WA lean toward the latter, that is, that Luther wished another daughter.<sup>146</sup> If this was the case, one could assume that Luther regarded the birth of a daughter as equally valuable as that of a son, if not even more preferable in this case, and thus did not present the view of a baby boy having greater significance. On the other hand, Luther had already fathered a son, his firstborn, so it may also well be that after already having had a boy the sexes of the following children were not a matter of anxiety.

It is also possible that Martin and Katharina had made deductions about the sex of the fetus on the basis of, for example, their estimation of its location in von

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143 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 231. *On Marriage Matters*.

144 WA BR 4, no. 1310, 541, fn.5.

145 Bainton 1971, 34.

146 WA BR 4, no. 1310, 541, fn.5.



Bora's womb. Since antiquity, several theories existed on the question of the sex of the unborn child. In the high Middle Ages, philosophers like William of Conches (c. 1090–after 1154) regarded that the sex of the fetus could be deduced by its location in the mother's womb. If the fetus grew on the right side, it would be male since the right side was warmer, due to the location of the liver. The fetus there was fed by warm blood, compared to a fetus that grew on the left side, which was further from the source of heat. The colder left side thus produced females.<sup>147</sup> The view of the connection between sex and temperature generally had to do with the humoral theory, discussed in other contexts in this study.<sup>148</sup>

In addition, several other things could be observed to reveal the sex of the child. Steven Ozment has remarked on a few of these, such as the importance of the skin color of the mother—if it was bad, the fetus was female. The color of the nipples was also of importance. Should the nipples turn yellow, the fetus was female, and should they turn dark or black, it was male. Furthermore, a simple test could be made by dropping secretion from the mother's breasts into a glass of water. A floating secretion was a sign of a girl, while a sinking one signified a boy.<sup>149</sup> Naturally it is impossible to know whether the statement was *de facto* due to Luther's wish, von Bora's feeling, the couple's reading of signs, or all of those. As in the question of lactation, however, also regarding the fetus' sex Luther seems to have been at least aware of, if not participating in, the commonly held views on bodiliness and gender.

Luther returned to a discussion of von Bora's motherhood and thus her corporality when Magdalena, their third child, was slightly over one year old. In his letter to von Bora in June 1530, Luther advised his wife how to give up breastfeeding:

I think [that] if you want to reduce feeding (*wehnen*) [and wean the baby] it would be good to [do it] little by little. That is, you first in one day interrupt (*abbrechest*) [the feeding] once, and the second day twice, until you cautiously give it up. Georg von Grumbach's mother, Lady Argula, who has been here with us and eaten with me, has advised me of this way.<sup>150</sup>

Luther wrote the letter from the Coburg fortress, where he stayed for several months during the Diet of Augsburg. Since he was an outlaw, the elector had not allowed him to travel to Augsburg with his colleagues.<sup>151</sup> According to Luther, he had

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147 MacLehose 1996, 7. The idea is expressed, for example, in the pseudo-Galenic *De spermate*. See Nederman & True 1996, 503–504.

148 For a concise characterization of humoral theory, see esp. Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 36–37; see also Robertson 1994, 144–147.

149 Ozment 1983, 113.

150 WA BR 5, no. 1582, 347–348, 7–11. To Katharina von Bora (June 5, 1530). Charlotte Methuen has noted, as well, that von Grumbach advised Luther in this matter. Methuen 2014, 24.

151 Arffman 1993, 90. For the Diet, see Arffman 1993, 89–96.

received the advice from Argula von Grumbach, who had arrived in Coburg a couple of days earlier.<sup>152</sup>

Noteworthy is the source of Luther's information: the Bavarian noblewoman Argula von Grumbach. Her advice was not, for instance, considered by Luther to be old wives' tales but a serious tip worth following. Examining Luther's view of von Grumbach in a separate article, I have noted that she was an example of faith for Luther, and a strategically important coworker—even though Luther did not support her publicly.<sup>153</sup> The quotation above shows in any case that Luther respected her as a mother giving advice to another mother. He was even happy to act as a messenger between the two women, although in his earlier theoretical stances he had disregarded female networks and the shared information between them. Perhaps what made the difference was that he could actively take part in the networking in his own wife's case.

A traditional practice influenced by thinkers such as Avicenna (c. 980–1037) held that children should not be weaned until the age of two. However, most of the sixteenth-century parents did wean their children earlier and, as Ozment has concluded, they changed the child's diet from milk to mashed whole food usually by their first birthday.<sup>154</sup> On the contrary, Wiesner-Hanks has argued that “the vast majority” of mothers breastfed their children until they were two or even older.<sup>155</sup> We do not know how von Bora had formerly managed weaning; we only have some fragmentary information about the early stages of Hans's breastfeeding. It may well be that von Bora had had difficulties weaning Hans. As for Elisabeth, because she died in infancy she most probably had not been weaned yet. Despite the uncertainty of whether the information provided by Argula von Grumbach was necessary or not, Luther's words reveal the interest that he had in his wife's childcare. Luther thus placed himself within the norms of the role of the *Hausvater*, which demanded that he provide support to his wife in childcare, which he did in a very practical manner.

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In sum, the new role of a husband since June 1525—and that of a father from June 1526 onwards—somewhat shifted Luther's evaluation of how to be a woman or a man, as well as his estimation of the social implications concerning gender roles

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152 For notions of von Grumbach's presence at the Coburg fortress, see WA BR 5, no. 1581, 346, 1–2. To Philipp Melanchthon (June 2/3, 1530); WA BR 5, no. 1583, 349, 27. To Wenzel Linck (June 5, 1530); WA BR 5, no. 1584, 351, 10–12. To Philipp Melanchthon (June 5, 1530); Matheson 2013, 121; Methuen 2013, 101–102.

153 Mikkola 2016, 61–62.

154 Ozment 1983, 121.

155 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 91. Wiesner-Hanks remarks that this was one of the means to restrict fertility. See Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 89–90.

in his own and his wife's case. All of the letters discussed in this chapter signal the change in Luther's way of constructing his masculinity, compared to the analyses made in Chapter IV.2 of his self-understanding as a friar. The letters also signal some change in how he treated femininity and female bodiliness.

Regarding the gender system, Luther's point of departure as a husband and father in the letters discussed above was somewhat more flexible, compared to his views in the earlier theoretical texts. The gradual change is clear not only on a practical level but also theoretically. One theme that reveals this very explicitly is Luther's stance toward adultery. In the beginning of the 1520s he had pondered: "Why do they [the authorities] not hang the adulterer? Should they do that I would not have to give such advice [on expelling the adulterer]."<sup>156</sup> Yet in 1530 in *On Marriage Matters*, he admitted how hard it was for everyone to maintain a proper Christian way of life.

In Luther's later opinion, if adultery took place, the guilty party must be taken back and forgiven. Likewise, he/she should be given the chance to mend his/her ways. After all, as Luther continued, "...it can very easily be seen of all of us that we fall. And who is without sin?"<sup>157</sup> Although Luther noted the command to stone the adulterer, he did not treat it as a proper option. Instead he suggested that it would be best if the couple could stay together.<sup>158</sup> He reminded his readers how serious a sin (*schwere sünde*) it was not to forgive and take one's spouse back, if the authorities had left the adulterer unpunished and had not expelled him/her either.<sup>159</sup> Compared to Luther's former opinions, it is clear that rather than stressing the proper biblical way to act—that is, to kill the adulterer in accordance with Mosaic Law<sup>160</sup>—Luther's main attention was targeted at persuading his readers to act according to love of their neighbor.<sup>161</sup> This could be interpreted as a softening on his part over the years.

Paul Hinlicky has stated somewhat pompously of the Luther's relationship that "precisely because they lived together a common life sexually, their gender arrangement was flexible."<sup>162</sup> It is true that the Luthers lived a common life sexually and it was a significant part of their relationship, as well as Luther's understanding of himself as a man, as Karant-Nunn, for instance, has noted.<sup>163</sup> Otherwise there seems

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156 WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 289. *Estate of Marriage*.

157 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 242. *On Marriage Matters*.

158 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 241.

159 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 242.

160 Deut. 22:22: "If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel." Discussed in Chapter II.2.

161 See, e.g., John 8:7 "When they persisted in questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let the person among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.'" For Luther's theological views on love, see, e.g., Lindberg 2008, 118–132; Raunio 2016.

162 Hinlicky 1988, 528.

163 Karant-Nunn 2008, 176–177, 186.

to be hardly any validity to Hinlicky's argument; cause and effect between sexual life and gender arrangement cannot be confirmed. A sexual relationship did not always lead to flexibility in defining gender roles, rather quite the opposite.<sup>164</sup> Recent scholarship has pointed out that power hierarchies did not vanish in the wake of love either, but "love was a vital force in ensuring the operation and continuation of patriarchy."<sup>165</sup> I suggest that there was an intersection of many factors, which changed over time, that affected the roles that both Luther and von Bora adopted.

In their case, Luther's flexibility in matters of gender hierarchy and the gender system is apparent in the way he increasingly treated von Bora as an active agent and even a quite dominant figure in his correspondence by the turn of the 1530s. Of course, this went against every theoretical depiction of the feminine way of being that Luther had made earlier in his life. On the other hand, his treatment of his wife was a very consistent and logical extension of his earlier discussions on other contemporary women, presented in Chapter III.3.

Luther's own way of being a man, as revealed from the letters, was heavily colored by his family life. The change from friar to husband and father is very evident in his correspondence. Luther fully put aside the ideal of a struggling cleric and quite smoothly changed his rhetoric to express his new social position. Especially the way he treated his children not only reveals the bonding that Luther aimed to create rhetorically with other fathers, but also his deep emotions for his family. However, apart from his notions of marital sex expressed in the very beginning of the relationship, his bodiliness *per se* is hardly treated in the letters under review. Perhaps this is only logical, since his new role was no longer in accordance with his former discussions on his body and sexuality.

Certainly firsthand experience of his wife's pregnancies and labors, and most likely those of his coworkers' wives as well, directed Luther's attention to female bodiliness and to the tough side of motherhood in a new way. This is apparent in his discussions of von Bora's bodily and mental state during her pregnancies, childbirths, and afterwards. Although Luther had dealt in the beginning of the 1520s with the dangers of motherhood, such as the possibility of dying in labor, the letters reveal Luther's more personal perspective on female bodiliness, which does not contest but rather complements the theoretical discussions seen thus far in the study. Luther's ways of constructing feminine and masculine ways of being and the gender system in other practical situations—and their relation to his theoretical viewpoints—shall be discussed next.

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164 See Roper 1989; 2016, esp. 281–282 for gender hierarchies; Wiesner-Hanks 2010b, esp. 10 for sexual relationship as a relationship of power.

165 See Barclay 2017, 219.

## VI BECAUSE OF OR DESPITE THE GENDERED BODY? RULES AND EXCEPTIONS AMONG LUTHER'S CONTEMPORARIES

O Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who have given me my son or daughter. I pray you, give (*beschere unnd gib*) him/her a pious, good, and Christian spouse, and help him/her through your Holy Spirit that she (*sie*) would live godly in matrimony—Now, [as you see,] a pious spouse is as necessary as a healthy hand or leg.<sup>1</sup>

The prayer is part of Luther's advice in the sermon *Marital Estate* on how and why to ask God for a suitable spouse. He advised not only youngsters but also their parents to pray for "a pious, good, and Christian spouse" with whom one could live with a conviction of being given a true gift of God. This kind of spouse could be compared to functioning body parts, which were essential for the normal life of a human being.

Reality was not always as sweet for couples as Luther, or other pastors for that matter, perhaps would have hoped. Luther was well aware of all kinds of troubles in relationships between women and men in general, and wives and husbands in particular, as has become clear in this study thus far. The focus of this chapter is devoted to couples whose problems led Luther to give them guidance. It consists largely of Luther's correspondence but also his treatises and sermons.

The examination sheds light on questions of how Luther constructed gender and the gender system in practical situations concerning his fellow men and women, and whether—and in what sense specifically—these formulations were in alignment with his overall viewpoints. Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to compare specific cases with Luther's theoretical viewpoints, on the one hand, and, on the other, to compare these cases with the picture that emerged from Luther's discussions concerning his own family life, that is, von Bora's way of being a woman and Luther's way of being a man.<sup>2</sup>

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1 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 19. *Marital Estate* 1525.

2 Deviating from former chapters, in this main chapter I have regarded it as helpful to use the first names of the people in question since it would be hard to otherwise distinguish between the couples sharing the same last name. Gender equality is thus employed in terms of calling both women and men by their first names. I acknowledge that this particular solution creates some asymmetry between the couples and Luther, as he is treated by his last name.

## 1. STRENGTHENING THE IDEAL OF GENDER HIERARCHY WITH THE “LITTLE WIFE” AND THE COUNSELING HUSBAND

The first couple to be examined is the Agricolas.<sup>3</sup> Elisabeth and John Agricola married in 1520 and had their first child the following year. Five years after their wedding, the family moved from Wittenberg to Eisleben, where John began to serve as an evangelical preacher and headmaster of a newly founded Latin school. At the time of their move to Eisleben, the Agricolas already had four children, and more were on the way.<sup>4</sup>

Luther and John's friendship was heartfelt. Not only the men themselves but also their families were close. John was regarded as Luther's loyal disciple.<sup>5</sup> The point of interest regarding Luther and the couple is a trio of letters written by Luther, two of which were to John and one to Elisabeth. The letter to Elisabeth in German is a pastoral *Trostbrief* in style, written on June 10, 1527.<sup>6</sup> The two letters to John in Latin discuss Elisabeth's wellbeing. The first letter to John was probably written on the same day as the one to Elisabeth, and the other was presumably written in the beginning of July.<sup>7</sup>

In his letter to Elisabeth, Luther comforted her by asking her to trust in Christ alone:

You must not be so fearful and hesitant (*kleinmutig vnd zcage*), but think that Christ is near and helps you to bear all your troubles (*vbell*). For He has not abandoned you, as your flesh and blood make you think (*als dir dein fleisch vnd bluth eingibt*).<sup>8</sup>

In his discussion on Luther's friends, Hans-Günter Leder has described Elisabeth as “sickly and obviously mentally distressed.”<sup>9</sup> In this particular letter there is no indication of the reason why Luther wrote to Elisabeth this way. It is obvious, however, that she was distressed either physically, mentally, or both.

Luther continued:

So be comforted now (*So sei nu getrost*) ... we will also pray, and pray earnestly, that God will accept you in His Son Christ and give [you] strength in such weakness of body and soul (*solicher schwachheit leibs vnd seelen*).<sup>10</sup>

It seems that the matter concerned both physical and spiritual troubles, as Luther alluded to both body and soul. Nevertheless, as has been discussed in Chapter II,

3 The couple has been introduced and shortly discussed already in Chapter III.2, where Luther's view of motherhood was analyzed.

4 Kawerau 1977, 58–60, 69; Rittgers 2014, 466.

5 Leder 1983, 420–421.

6 WA BR 4, no. 1112, 210–211. To Elisabeth Agricola (June 6, 1527).

7 WA BR 4, no. 1111, 210. To Johann Agricola (June 6?, 1527); WA BR 4, no. 1119, 219. To Johann Agricola (beginning of July, 1527).

8 WA BR 4, no. 1112, 211, 6–8.

9 Leder 1983, 421.

10 WA BR 4, no. 1112, 211, 10–11, 13–14.

the body and soul were not independent of each other in Luther's view but interconnected. As Roper has noted, the contemporary opinion, as a whole, held that the spiritual and physical could not be separated,<sup>11</sup> although there was a certain difference between the two. The bodily state of the human being affected her soul, and the wellbeing of the soul had an effect on her body.

Luther seems to have thought that Elisabeth's suffering was real. However, as he put it, total despair due to feeling like God left her alone was merely an illusion that her imagination had created. Her *fleisch vnd bluth* made her perceive that God had abandoned her. In this sense, the flesh referred to something that tempted the human being to sin, and was as such it was opposed to spirit. Thus, Luther seems to have alluded to the idea of "old Adam" within the human being: the flesh and blood was in this sense an image to describe the human inclination to sin. The situation was of most grave; Elisabeth had fallen into unbelief, as Luther implied, which was the source of every other serious sin.

This kind of use of the concept of the flesh—as a negative reference to the human being's sinfulness—has been verified in the examination of Luther's texts from the early 1520s, and the very same way of using the term can be found in the mid- and late-1520s as well. For example, in the treatise *On the Bondage of the Will* (1525), as well as in his *Explanation on Psalm 117* (1530), the connection between the flesh and sin is obvious.<sup>12</sup> It can also be found in a very explicit form in Luther's *Booklet of Advice for Simple Pastors* written in 1529. In this text, Luther pondered the monastic way of living, and he reminded that it was not of God but of people:

[The life of the cloistered] should properly be regarded as the most worldly and most carnal (*weltlichst und fleischlichst*) because it was invented and endowed from flesh and blood (*fleisch und blut*) and entirely out of worldly sense and reason.<sup>13</sup>

In the *Large Catechism* in 1529, Luther noted that "flesh and blood remain flesh and blood" in an analogous context as in the *Booklet of Advice*.<sup>14</sup> He further highlighted the connection between the flesh and sin by using expressions such as "the devil, world, and flesh (*teuffel, welt und fleisch*)" in his texts.<sup>15</sup>

11 Roper 1997, 192.

12 WA 18, 712. *Bondage of the Will*; WA 31<sup>1</sup>, 249a. *Explanation on Psalm 117*. For the opposition of the flesh and spirit during the later 1520s, see also e.g. WA 20, 549b. Sermon on Jeremiah 23; WA 31<sup>1</sup>, 91a. Exposition of the Psalm "Confitemini."

13 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 75. *Booklet of Advice for Simple Pastors*. Henceforth referred to as *Booklet of Advice*. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

14 WA 30<sup>I</sup>, 162. *Large Catechism*. Sometimes the negative connotation is stressed by connecting the world and the devil, and the flesh and blood together, as in e.g. WA 20, 553b. Sermon on Jeremiah 23.

15 See, e.g., WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 205, 236. *On Marriage Matters*; WA 31<sup>1</sup>, 86a, 89a, 94a. Exposition of the Psalm "Confitemini."

Alternatively, it is possible that in the case of Elisabeth, Luther used flesh and blood as a concrete portrayal of the ill human body, whose physical state and appearance told of the person's mental state. *Fleisch vnd bluth* as an image of the human body is indeed another possible reading, as the analyses made in Chapter II also prove. These terms also appear in this particular sense in Luther's later texts, such as a few *Sermons on Genesis* from 1526.<sup>16</sup> In the sense of a concrete human body, this discussion comes close to what Luther had presented in the *Magnificat* in 1521, for instance. According to his rhetoric, the human being's spiritual and mental state affected the body. In other words, one's corporal state was heavily affected by the soul, as I have concluded in Chapter II. A similar discussion of soul and body can be found in, for instance, Luther's letters from the late 1520s. Discussing the human being's nature to react to illnesses, he wrote that sometimes one fell ill merely because of the fear of sickness. As Luther explained to John Hausmann in 1529, "[I]magination causes the downfall and the state of the soul pours over the body."<sup>17</sup>

Luther's tone toward Elisabeth was not judging, however, despite her inclination to unbelief, but carefully built up to ensure and comfort. He used pastoral phrases, especially at the end of the letter,<sup>18</sup> such as: "Call [God] now only from an earnest heart, and you will know that he hears you..."<sup>19</sup> These wordings do not appear to be personal as much as a common way for a pastor to speak to a person in despair. As a point of comparison, a similar type of comforting can be found in a letter around the same time to a young woman Else von Kanitz, whom Luther asked to come to Wittenberg to teach girls. In the letter he referred to von Kanitz's spiritual struggles, and he used similar words as in the letter to Elisabeth, such as "be comforted (*seid getrost*)."<sup>20</sup>

A slightly different viewpoint is offered in the two letters to Elisabeth's husband John. Luther wrote to John possibly on the same day as the comforting letter to Elisabeth:

It seems good for your Elsa to take counsel from us, if changing the air that she has become accustomed to cause [that] she departed to this place for a few days. You [should] advise in this matter simultaneously [in the same way?], for we will do gladly whatever is able to benefit your most pleasing little wife (*uxorculae*), a simple and honest little woman (*mulierculae*), in any way.<sup>21</sup>

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16 For references to the flesh and blood expressly in the sense of human body, see, e.g., WA 10<sup>II</sup>, 301, 304. *On Married Life*; WA 20, 331, 333. Sermon on Genesis 3; WA 20, 342–343, 347. Sermon on Genesis 22. In addition, there obviously are numerous references to Christ's flesh and blood in Luther's texts.

17 WA BR 5, no. 1468, 139, 17–18. To John Hausmann (August 27, 1529).

18 WA BR 4, no. 1112, 211, 6–15.

19 WA BR 4, no. 1112, 211, 8–9.

20 See WA BR 4, no. 1133, 236, esp. 9–15. To Else von Kanitz (August 22, 1527).

21 WA BR 4, no. 1111, 210, 8–11.



Luther had preached on January 15, 1525 in a sermon of the *Marital Estate* that the woman was like a weak branch of a grape vine (*schwachen Weinstock*),<sup>22</sup> which her husband should treat with care, regarding her as a member of his own body. Similar to the way in which a branch is bound when it cannot stand on its own, the husband should use a fine string of straw, not chains of steel, to support his wife delicately. Although the woman was the weaker vessel (*dem schwächsten werckzeuge*), she should be given her honor as such, as she was the co-heir of God's grace.<sup>23</sup>

Luther explicated this last point in a very similar form in his Small Catechism in 1529, which was written as a simple instruction for both pastors and evangelical households: "You husbands, live with your wives with reason and give your wives (*weiblichen*) her honor as the weak vessel (*dem schwachen werckzeug*), for she is the joint heir of the grace of life (*miterben der gnade des lebens*)..."<sup>24</sup> The aim of the marital sermon and the Catechism was similar: to induce men and women to align their ways of being in accordance with Luther's quite traditional means of understanding the gender system. In this context, as in many others thus far, the relations of the sexes are explicated by Luther in a quite similar manner as his predecessors.

Luther clearly applied his viewpoint of female weakness and male obligation to support the wife. He regarded that not only John but also his own household could help Elisabeth in her difficult situation. His favorable attitude was rhetorically linked to Elisabeth's characteristics. She was, according to Luther's evaluation, a pious Christian wife—pleasing, simple, and honest. His appraisal of Elisabeth was thus in line with the prayer, referred to at the beginning of the main chapter, of the best kind of spouse one could ask for. A good wife was pious, good, and Christian, as Luther explained in the *Marital Estate*.<sup>25</sup> Being pleasing, simple, and honest also held connotations of obedience and humility, as the diminutives *muliercula* and *uxorcula*<sup>26</sup> suggest. It is proper to assume that the diminutives were used to refer to and emphasize the hierarchy between the sexes: John was the head and Elisabeth was beneath him. It is possible, of course, that Elisabeth was much younger than John and was treated as a little wife because of their age difference. It is most probable, however, that despite any possible age difference the diminutives referred also and especially to gender hierarchy.

The Agricolas apparently took Luther's advice, for in the beginning of July, Luther informed John of having received his wife in Wittenberg.<sup>27</sup> After meeting

22 Compare Ps. 128:3.

23 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate*.

24 WA 30<sup>1</sup>, 334a. *Small Catechism*.

25 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 19. *Marital Estate*.

26 This diminutive was in Luther's use of Katharina Jonas in a 1524 letter. See WA BR 3, no. 757, 318, 6. To John Lang (July 6, 1524).

27 WA BR 4, no. 1119, 219, 2–3. Behind Luther's invitation could have been an idea of her need of face-to-face pastoral conversation. For the importance of counseling viva voce, see Ebeling 1997, 14.

her in person, Luther judged that the troubles were first and foremost mental, not physical:

...[Elisabeth's] feebleness, as you see, concerns rather the mind than the body (*animo magis quam corpore*). ... In sum, her illness is not apothecaries' [business] (as they call them) nor [should she be] entrusted in Hippocrates' mixtures but in a sedulous [reading of] Scripture and in plasters of God's word.<sup>28</sup>

According to Luther's observation, Elisabeth was weak in spirit, not in her body. Furthermore, the difference between body and soul resulted in a difference in treatment, as Luther put it. Bodily troubles were to be treated with medical, Hippocratic means, whereas the soul was only treatable by means of God's word. The origins of the problems in one's wellbeing were thus to be taken carefully into account before symptomatic care was possible. The spiritual weakness of the female sex was hardly anything new in Luther's thinking; in the case of Elisabeth, he seems to have merely put his overall view into practice. Luther's discussions about Eve's weakness in the *Sermons on Genesis*, among other texts from the beginning of the 1520s, had already emphasized women as the Achilles' heel of humanity because of their vulnerability to temptation.

Luther further depicted Elisabeth's case as an example of a common feature of the female sex, namely, a lack of confidence in male authorities. Women were unable to trust their husbands, on the one hand, and, on the other, to believe that God's word had anything to do with them: "But such are our wives that they think that God's word does not concern them but us husbands (*nos maritos*), who are [their] protectors and guardians (*defensores et tutores*)."<sup>29</sup>

The notion of women's refusal to believe that God's word concerned them can point in two directions. First, Luther could have meant that women were willing to submit to their husbands to such an extent that they wanted God's word to be filtered for them only through their husbands. A second, and more probable, explanation is that Luther thought that wives wanted to live without taking God's word into account by any means, thus showing their disrespect not only toward God but also toward men. They were not interested in pondering God's will because they regarded that only men had to do that. Hence, in the worst case, they turned the meaning of Genesis and its preachers upside down: the prohibition for women to hear God's word other than through men, and the notion that *mandatum divinum* was given only to men,<sup>30</sup> was taken by women as liberation from

28 WA BR 4, no. 1119, 219, 3, 6–8. Ronald K. Rittgers has noted this letter in his article concerning Luther's pastoral care, but he has not, however, analyzed it in detail nor has he taken into account the other letters to the Agricola couple, discussed above. See Rittgers 2014, 466.

29 WA BR 4, no. 1119, 219, 10–12.

30 See WA 24, 71b–72b. (WA 14, 130b, 133b.) *Sermons on Genesis*; Mattox 2003a, 53–54; Mattox 2003b, 459–462.

God's word once and for all. Hence, there seems to be two opposing schemes behind Luther's evaluation: on the one hand, the ideal of a subservient wife and, on the other, the threat of female disobedience.

Elisabeth was no exception to the common rule, as she did not want to take her husband's advice in matters that distressed her. She believed that he was counseling her out of love (*amore*), not on the strength of his capability of judgment (*iudicio*), as Luther put it.<sup>31</sup> In this statement there seems again to be coherence with the picture of Eve in the *Sermons on Genesis*, who fell into sin after starting to doubt the credibility of Adam and, accordingly, God. Thus, even the most pleasing uxorcule was in danger of becoming dominated by her female nature inherited from Eve.

In the letters to John, Luther's role was not so much pastoral as comparable to that of a colleague and another husband. Manhood and being a husband were the issues in particular that Luther used as a medium of bonding. He advised John to continue to teach and counsel his wife, as well as make her aware that in spite of her sex the word of God was targeted at her. He noted in addition that he had to struggle with his own wife regarding these very same questions.<sup>32</sup> Luther's ideal concerning the man was, as seen in the case of the Agricolas, for reason to prevail in spite of one's love for his wife. He presented this idea implicitly when noting that it was hard for women to believe that their husbands were consulting them on the basis of their capability of judgment, not out of love. Conversely, according to Luther, husbands were acting on the strength of reason despite their wives' suspicion of their tenderheartedness. As such, this case resembles Luther's ideals regarding his own masculinity, presented earlier. As I have shown, he expressed astonishment when confessing his incapability to react to his daughter's death according to reason. Although in Luther's own case it sometimes proved to be impossible to respond according to the male ideal, he seems to have cherished the ideal of rationality in John's case.

Both rationality and love were needed, however, in the duty of Hausvater. As the formerly quoted passage reveals, Luther regarded husbands as protectors and guardians of their wives.<sup>33</sup> Guardianship of the husband was indeed regulated by Saxon law,<sup>34</sup> and thus in this regard Luther merely followed law and custom. In his marital sermon of 1525, Luther described male guardianship as loving the wife as one's own body,<sup>35</sup> a familiar image that he had used many times before during the early 1520s. Luther even specified that the woman had not been taken from the

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31 WA BR 4, no. 1119, 219, 4–6.

32 WA BR 4, no. 1119, 220, 12–15. "*Hoc enim agone et cum mea Ketha assidue pugno...*"

33 WA BR 4, no. 1119, 220, 11.

34 SM 1999, 79, 127.

35 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate*.

man's feet, but from the middle parts of the male body; thus, she should be honored, not treated *wie ein fußtuch*.<sup>36</sup>

In the *Booklet of Advice*, Luther continued to consider the issue in a similar vein:

...men should love their wives as their own bodies (*als yhre eigene leibe*). Who loves his wife, he loves himself. Since no one has ever hated his own flesh (*fleisch*), he nourishes it and cares for it similar as the Lord his congregation (*die gemeine*).<sup>37</sup>

According to Luther, treating the wife in sorrow and sickness as well as one's own body had its roots in the very fact that her origin was through the male body. Even though the woman was referred to as the flesh, this was not done in a pejorative manner; in the quotation, the body and flesh had the same meaning.

Such similarity of the body and flesh is evident also the following year in *On Marriage Matters*, where Luther stressed that a married couple was and should always remain "one body (*ein leib*)."<sup>38</sup> He had often referred to this idea with the concept of the flesh, as has been discussed especially in Chapter II. At this point, it is worth noting that the use of the concepts of the flesh and the body and the discussion concerning the woman as part of the man—his flesh, his body, and thus his possession—seem to have remained rather similar in Luther's writings throughout the 1520s. As regards Luther's views on the soul-body relationship, examined above, the consistency of these discussions in Luther's texts throughout the 1520s suggests that Luther may have also held a very similar understanding of that topic throughout the decade.

D. H. Green has credited the Saxon theologian Hugh of Saint-Victor (c. 1096–1141) for being the first one to use "the rib cliché" differently than accustomed in the traditional misogynist interpretation of medieval theologians.<sup>39</sup> The most misogynist views held that Eve had been created "out of a perversely bent rib."<sup>40</sup> In Hugh's thinking, the woman was not created from the man's head since she was not meant to dominate him. Neither was she formed from the man's feet, since she was not intended for subjection. Instead, as she was created from the man's side, it showed that she was destined to be his companion. In this way, Green claims, gender equality within marriage was "retrieved from inferiority" in Hugh's reasoning.<sup>41</sup> John Thompson has noted for his part that Peter Lombard, to whom allegories becoming commonplace has often been attributed, in fact used Hugh as his source.<sup>42</sup> As regards the Reformation era, Thompson has maintained that in general:

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36 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 24. *Marital Estate*.

37 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 79. *Booklet of Advice*.

38 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 244. *On Marriage Matters*.

39 Green 2009, 12.

40 MacCulloch 2003, 649.

41 Green 2009, 12.

42 Thompson 2009, 512.

Reformation-era exegetes are not particularly original in their fondness for the allegory, but it is of interest to note the diverse lessons and uses they derive. Many soften what is otherwise a strongly hierarchical account of the relationship of men and women, underscoring the companionable aspect of marriage.<sup>43</sup>

To be sure, Luther—once again—joined in the traditional language concerning the gender system with the metaphor of the rib. However, he did this largely in line with what Thompson describes in the quotation above, according to the less misogynistic interpretation, not the one stressing female imperfectness. By placing the woman explicitly somewhere in the middle, Luther was able both to prohibit her misuse and to deny her domination.

Although in 1524 Luther had preached that whoever took a wife should consider that he was a guardian of a child, his language in the Agricola case or in the texts referred to above did not contain this kind of imagery. Yet by no means did he present an equal relationship of two adults either. Instead, his discussion by the end of the 1520s was close to his position in the treatise *On Married Life* from 1522, wherein he stressed the importance of honoring both women and men as they were created. It also seems that Luther's motive, both in theory as in the case of the Agricolas, was similar to his earlier views: to fortify marriage as an institution and as a bond between the spouses by emphasizing the different, yet complementary nature of the two sexes.

In the three letters, Luther acted first and foremost as a fatherly, pastoral counselor toward Elisabeth and as a fellow-husband toward John, although Luther's position as regards John held a pastoral undertone as well, as I have shown in this chapter. Luther's somewhat different approach to the two not only took Elisabeth's and John's different statuses as a given, but also constructed the difference discursively. I believe that in part the difference resulted in Luther's eyes from the fact that John was his colleague and Elisabeth merely the wife. However, the difference was also partially a result of Luther's specific views on the difference of the sexes and thereby of his understanding of a proper way to write to a male or a female recipient.

In regard to cases where there was no option to appeal to a male guardian, as in the case of Else von Kanitz, Luther built his language slightly differently but still retained the view of male authority. Von Kanitz did not have a husband, and her guardian seems to have been a female relative, Hanna von Plausig.<sup>44</sup> Whereas Luther's letters to and about Elisabeth stressed John's and his own authority, in regard to von Kanitz the male authorities were Christ, the prophets, and the apostles, who had suffered more than she had (*Christus hat auch solchs alles gelitten und viel heiligen Propheten und Apostel*).<sup>45</sup> God was treated as the Father, who would

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43 Ibid.

44 WA BR 4, no. 1133, 236, 4.

45 WA BR 4, no. 1133, 236, 12–13.

eventually help his daughter (*leidet solche Rute vom Vater gerne, er wird Euch auch wohl davon helfen in seiner Zeit*).<sup>46</sup> The emphasis on these authorities, especially on Christ, was a common pastoral practice aimed at assuring the suffering Christian that he was not alone, but that God knew his troubles on the basis of his own experience.<sup>47</sup> As such, Luther's stance toward von Kanitz resembles his earlier discussions concerning Florentina von Oberweimar, presented in Chapter III.3.

However, the matter can also be seen as Luther's usage of male authorities as objects of identification for von Kanitz. Susan Karant-Nunn has remarked that starting in the early 1520s, the amount of female role models for women decreased, a phenomenon she calls "the impoverishment of the feminine aspects of religion."<sup>48</sup> Luther's discussions during the early years of the 1520s on the need to focus on Christ instead of the Virgin Mary provide probably one of the most clear examples of this. On the other hand, his simultaneous evaluation of Mary as an ideal Christian and thus a role model for both women and men is not in line with the thought of a general loss of female role models. Yet again, Luther's accentuation of the husband's role in labor instead of the female circle and the legends of female patron saints, for example, highlights the shift from women's homosocial bonding to male dominance being exemplary. By and large, therefore, the tendency to stress the role of men as models for women was something that Luther also shared.

## 2. GENDER IDEALS MEET REALITY: LUTHER FUSING THEORY AND PRACTICE

### STRONG WOMEN AND A WEAK MAN?

The second case is about Luther's responses to Katharina and Justus Jonas. Luther corresponded actively with Justus but also, at least occasionally, with Katharina.<sup>49</sup> The letters that shed light on womanhood and manhood in their case are dated to the spring of 1530. The context is Katharina's pregnancy and the aftermath of the childbirth. The Diet of Augsburg was about to begin in June, and Luther was heading there along with Justus and other colleagues.<sup>50</sup> While Luther had to stay at

46 WA BR 4, no. 1133, 236, 14–15. Similarly WA BR 4, no. 1112, 211, 9–10. To Elisabeth Agricola (June 6, 1527).

47 Ebeling 1997, 14.

48 Karant-Nunn 1982, 36.

49 Only two of Luther's letters to Katharina Jonas have been preserved in WA: WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284. To Katharina Jonas (April 23, 1530); WA BR 10, no. 3729, 25–26. To Katharina Jonas (March 26, 1542).

50 Methuen 2014, 23.

the fortress of Coburg, Justus had continued his travel with Philipp Melanchthon to the Diet of Augsburg, arriving there on May 2.<sup>51</sup>

The noblewoman Katharina Falk (?–1542) and evangelical pastor Justus Jonas (1493–1555), who was a professor at the University of Wittenberg like Luther, had gotten married already in February 1522. Their marriage was among the first for an evangelical pastor.<sup>52</sup> By 1530, Katharina and Justus had arguably had four children, of which only one, Justus Jonas Junior, born in December 1525, was alive.<sup>53</sup> Their first son had been born already in 1524,<sup>54</sup> and at least one of their children, Fredric, who was born some time in 1527, died in the plague in 1529 at the age of two.<sup>55</sup> Katharina was expecting their next child in the spring of 1530.<sup>56</sup>

Luther and Justus had become friends in 1521 when Justus accompanied Luther in his travels to the Diet of Worms. Their life-long friendship deepened over the years, being not only collegial but also personal by nature. After the marriage of von Bora and Luther in 1525, the relationship between the two families became increasingly intense. The relations between Luther and Justus were highly reciprocal—they acted, for instance, as comforters to each other vis-à-vis the hardships of life.<sup>57</sup> As Hans-Günter Leder has noted, “also the wives and children were fully integrated to this familiar friendship.”<sup>58</sup>

Luther wrote to Katharina after reading a letter that she had written to her husband.<sup>59</sup> Luther rejoiced that the pregnant Katharina, near her time, was well: “It pleased me very much that God has given You carefree bravery (*leichtern Mut*) and good hope—for both the fruit of the body’s (*der Frucht des Leibs*) and the damage of the house’s sake.”<sup>60</sup> In modern German, *Mut* refers to masculine bravery, but it is possible that it did not have a specifically gendered meaning during Luther’s time. In spite of the notion of Katharina’s bravery, Luther encouraged her by stating that she should be comforted (*Jrh sollt getrost sein*), as everything would go

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51 Lehmann 1963, 60–62.

52 Lehmann 1963, 43; Plummer 2012, 136. The biographical trend to write merely of occupational themes in regard to great male figures of history is clearly evident in Lehmann’s book. Katharina Jonas is mentioned only once in the text, and their family life deserves no attention whatsoever.

53 This can be deduced on the basis of WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, note 13. To Katharina Jonas (April 23, 1530). See also Ebeling 1999, 356–357.

54 Luther refers to Katharina Jonas’s delivery in WA BR 3, no. 757, 318, 1. To John Lang (July 6, 1524).

55 See, for instance, WA BR 5, no. 1557, 269, note 3.

56 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284.

57 Lehmann 1963, 28–30; Leder 1983, 433–435.

58 Leder 1983, 433.

59 This tells of the contemporary culture of letter writing and reading, and supports the notion that even the most personal letters were to some extent public by nature.

60 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, 3–4.

fine, especially with the house.<sup>61</sup> He attached a further wish to the consolation by continuing: “So I hope God will also mercifully help [you] from the body’s burden (*des Leibes Last*) and, God willing, it would be twins (*ein Paar*).”<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps Luther was hoping that twins would compensate for the former loss of two children. The wording “body’s burden” was not, as far as I know, used by Luther elsewhere in his texts to refer to pregnancy. It can refer to difficulties during pregnancy, which Luther mentioned later to Philipp Melanchthon.<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the wording represents well Luther’s overall view of the reality of the burdened female body in the post-lapsarian world, which he had witnessed in relation to his own wife several times by this time as well. By connecting the talk of the burdened female body to the difficult situation of the Jonas house,<sup>64</sup> Luther returned to the idea of the woman as building, which he had explicated in the *Sermons on Genesis* some years earlier. Even if the connection was unintentional from Luther’s part, which it perhaps was, it nonetheless strengthened the link between woman and her bodiliness by emphasizing her interior, as it were, by means of comparing it to a house.

The wording “*Jrh sollt getrost sein*” which Luther used to console Katharina had featured already in the letters to Elisabeth Agricola<sup>65</sup> and Else von Kanitz,<sup>66</sup> as was discussed in the former chapter. The difference between Luther’s discussion concerning them, on the one hand, and Katharina, on the other, is that he did not allude to Katharina’s need to have pastoral advice, but quite the opposite. Luther’s pastoral manner toward Katharina Jonas thus seems somewhat unrelated to her situation, as it is represented in Luther’s letter. It is possible that Luther assumed that *despite* Katharina’s “carefree bravery and good hope,” she was in need of his guidance and comforting. Another possible explanation is that the utterance was such an integral part of Luther’s views on how to write to a person in the middle of misfortune that he put it in the letter out of habit.

In some contexts other than this, Luther seems to have thought that women could be just as strong as men in situations where it was needed. Discussing women at the empty tomb in a sermon on Easter Sunday in March 1529, he pondered:

Scripture says that man is of greater courage and stronger body than woman (*man stercker muts und leibs halben quam mulier*), [but] the most splendid preaching of the angel is revealed to the weakest vessel (*dem schwächsten gefes*)... You see in those women the great, excellent, unconquerable strength (*ein gros trefflich unüberwindlich sterck*) which they hold

61 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, 8–9. “...mit dem Hause sol des kein Not haben; den es ist der Sachen Rat funden.”

62 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, 10–11.

63 The pre- and post-natal problems are referred to in WA BR 5, no. 1567, 318, esp. 6–9. To Philipp Melanchthon (May 15, 1530).

64 Noted also in Ebeling 1999, 356.

65 WA BR 4, no. 1112, 211, 11.

66 WA BR 4, no. 1133, 236, 13.



from the Word since they stand against all the insults of the devil. For, by themselves, women are absurd [and] foolish. Thus it is appropriate, and packed into them is a combination of weakness, strength, wealth, [and] poverty (*schwachheit, potentia, divitiae, armut*) because those who take up the Gospel are Magdalene, weak, and nevertheless the Word which they hear goes beyond death [and] sin.<sup>67</sup>

The language about women's weakness in body and mind, or their stupidity, is an essential part of Luther's discussion in this context as elsewhere. However, I regard the other lines of the quotation as more important—as something that breaks the canon of female otherness. Namely, as Luther put it, women possessed “the great, excellent, unconquerable strength” and were “a combination of weakness, strength, wealth, and poverty.” It seems that strength and wealth were qualities that a woman could have only in or through her relation to God. This was the case with Katharina Jonas as well: Luther acknowledged that her bravery and hope were of God, not belonging to her. By herself the woman was merely “absurd and foolish,” as the quotation above reveals. In Luther's view, what was essential is that a woman could realize these positive features in her way of being.

In the sermon, Luther explained to his listeners the fact that the first witnesses of the resurrection were all women. It could well have been enough for him to say merely that God operated through weaker vessels at the tomb in order to paradoxically highlight His glory and strength. Instead, he pondered the women's qualities as discussed above—and he continued with the example of Mary Magdalene: “...Mary signifies a star of the sea. Magdalene [means] a good, firm, [and] strong castle. For that reason, John calls only her by name. ... [She] can be equally strong as Solomon.”<sup>68</sup> For Luther, the women at the tomb, especially Mary Magdalene, were model examples for all Christians.<sup>69</sup> According to Wiberg Pedersen, “Mary Magdalene represents the faithfulness that can overcome social debasement as well as other worldly tribulations because she is concerned about the other, serving the fellow human being without concern for herself...”<sup>70</sup> In this sense Luther treated Mary Magdalene similarly as Virgin Mary, discussed in Chapter III.1, as a non-gendered example for women and men alike. Furthermore, she could even be equally strong as men, as Luther indicated in his discussion. Arguably the question was first and foremost of one of spiritual strength—that is, belief.

Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks have argued that for Luther, one aspect of great importance regarding biblical women was their weakness, through which it was possible to highlight the work of God in elevating the weak and bringing down

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67 WA 29, 276a–277a. Sermon on Easter Sunday. Translation by Susan Karant-Nunn & Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

68 WA 29, 277a. Sermon on Easter Sunday.

69 WA 29, 277a. Sermon on Easter Sunday.

70 Wiberg Pedersen 2017, 137.

the strong. In this way, he reminded contemporary men to not take credit themselves for their “faith or success.”<sup>71</sup> I believe Wiberg Pedersen discusses the theme similarly by noting that in Luther’s thinking, biblical women’s “heroic self-humiliation conform to Christ’s kenotic self-debasement” that elevated them.<sup>72</sup> This is likely the case; Luther’s intention was to stress the agency of God through these characters: Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, for example. Given my analyses of Luther’s contemporary women in Chapter III.3, as well as in this chapter, it can well be said that also many of his contemporary women acquaintances—Katharina Schütz Zell, Florentina von Oberweimar, and Katharina Jonas, among others—served as models of faith in his rhetoric.

In the case of the Jonas couple, Luther noted that contrary to Katharina’s calmness (and exemplariness in that regard, I would add), Justus was greatly worried about his wife (*Euer Herr ... sorget für Euch sehr*).<sup>73</sup> He thus constructed juxtaposition between the couple: Katharina was presented as confident and carefree, whereas Justus expressed worry and torment. Given that in Luther’s rhetoric it was God who had granted Katharina this mental state, it can be asked whether Justus, in Luther’s opinion, lacked the experience of God’s comfort. In this case, was it Justus who was inclined to unbelief?

Timothy Wengert has noted that Luther’s pastoral ministry was primarily colored by ambition to adapt his language according to his hearers. By adjusting his language he was in practice able to get out his message more efficiently.<sup>74</sup> One could assume, then, that Luther could adapt his language according to gender as well. Indeed, when Luther’s statement to Katharina is compared to the letter that Luther sent to Justus a day later, there is not even a hint of any need to comfort Justus, despite Luther’s observation to Katharina that her husband was more distressed than her. In fact, this letter did not contain anything about Justus’s personal situation.<sup>75</sup> Luther even noted that he had nothing to write (*Vides me nihil habere, quod scribam...*).<sup>76</sup> In the end he included an exhortation: “The Lord be with you, and let us pray for each other (*oremus pro invicem*).”<sup>77</sup> Due to the exhortation’s idea of reciprocity, it seems that it was directed at an equal more than at a member of Luther’s flock. Hence, it points to the collegial relationship between Luther and Justus.

In the next letter to Justus, Luther was happy to note the birth of their baby: “Truly I congratulate you on the second Frederick (*altero Friderico*), the little son

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71 Karant-Nunn & Wiesner-Hanks 2003, 60–61.

72 Wiberg Pedersen 2017, 137.

73 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, 5–7.

74 Wengert 2009, 23.

75 WA BR 5, no. 1553, 289–290. To Justus Jonas (April 24, 1530).

76 WA BR 5, no. 1553, 289, 20–21.

77 WA BR 5, no. 1553, 289, 24.

[who was] recently born.”<sup>78</sup> He also returned to Justus’s former torment by stating at the end of the letter that “[God] took away your sadness and was compelled to return new Frederick [to you]. . . . God, who enriches you, protects you, and blesses you, amen.”<sup>79</sup> References to “new Frederick” mirrored the contemporary custom of naming the next-born child after his or her dead sibling.<sup>80</sup> Luther’s pastoral approach is also clear in this letter. If he had regarded earlier that Justus’s faith was not as strong in hardship as his wife’s, he now could prove to him that God was taking care of him after all. It is noteworthy, however, that the pastoral manner was used in the case of Justus only after the worst torment was over, almost as if Luther had hesitated to bring the subject up earlier. This being the case, it may also be possible that the nature of their relationship as male colleagues affected Luther’s language, as seems to have been the case with the Agricola couple.

The Jonas couple lost their newborn only three days after his birth.<sup>81</sup> Luther’s tone changed in a comforting letter to Justus sent a couple of weeks after the baby’s death.<sup>82</sup> In this *Trostbrief*, Luther, rather than wished unambiguously Justus to be comforted, commanded: “But see that you stay strong in Christ (*sed tu vide, ut in Christo roboreris*)...”<sup>83</sup> and “Therefore I beg you to bear the discipline of this Father prudently (*quare te oro, ut disciplinam hanc patris prudenter feras*).”<sup>84</sup> Gerhard Ebeling, who has discussed the same letters to the Jonas couple in his own study, has paid no attention to these passages. He has focused on the idea of human weakness as opposed to Christ’s strength, which he gives to Christians in difficulties.<sup>85</sup> In this way, Ebeling has treated the letter from one viewpoint, that of a *Seelsorge*, but left out of the analysis the ideal of masculinity which Luther presented, and which comes up explicitly in the passages above.

According to Susan Karant-Nunn: “Of course, he [Luther] understood the pain of bereavement and offered epistolary consolation to those who had lost loved ones. The form of that consolation, however, was the effort to lift the recipient above desolation and tears.”<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Luther’s exhortation concerning Justus was predicated on a man proving his strength in adversity, although all human strength

78 WA BR 5, no. 1557, 296, 3–4. To Justus Jonas (April 29, 1530).

79 WA BR 5, no. 1557, 269–270, 6–7, 10–11.

80 The central idea was that the next child substituted for the dead child. See, for instance, WA BR 5, no. 1557, 269, note 3.

81 WA BR 5, no. 1557, 296, note 3.

82 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 323–324. To Justus Jonas (May 19, 1530). Luther had, however, written to Melanchthon in May 15 and told him to inform Jonas of the baby’s death instead of his doing it himself. Luther did not want to increase Jonas’s pain, as he noted, by writing to him himself. See WA BR 5, no. 1567, 318. To Philipp Melanchthon (May 15, 1530).

83 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 323, 6.

84 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 324, 21–22.

85 Ebeling 1997, 359.

86 Karant-Nunn 2010, 195.

is given by Christ. In other words, strength must be a visible part of grieving as a male. Whereas it was acceptable for women to be weak and needy, as seems to have been the case with Elisabeth and Katharina, men should stay strong and prudent even in the midst of great human tragedies.

Bodiliness played an integral part in Luther's mode of comforting. It can be read predominantly in his gendered premises of female weakness and male strength, which in light of my previous discussions were derived from and intertwined with bodily differences. Luther also explicated the significance of the body in this particular letter to Justus.<sup>87</sup> He explained the nature and significance of tribulations and sorrow first by noting that godless people lived in (imaginary) happiness and safety. The part of true Christians was nevertheless different, for they had to feel pain and sorrow not only mentally but also in their bodies: "...the Scripture becomes fulfilled in our body (*in nostro corpore impleantur Scripturae*)," as Luther put it.<sup>88</sup> As such, the notion was very much in line with Luther's understanding of the human beings' state in the post-lapsarian world—they felt the punishments of the fall very concretely in their bodies in everyday life.

The notion of Scripture as a corporal reality for Christians was emphasized by associating it with salvation. Hence, Luther connected the human body together with salvation by stating that one could live only through the fulfillment of God's word in the body (*...Scripturae, quae nisi impleantur, nos salvi esse non possumus; at illis impletis, nos vivemus*).<sup>89</sup> He thus related the suffering of one man to a wider perspective and made Justus's case an example of the reality of Christian living. At the same time, he discussed the loss of the baby as an event that concerned the human body in an extremely profound way. Perhaps he was also thinking about his own experience after the death of his daughter Elisabeth, although in that case he had not alluded as straightforwardly to bodily aspects. It is interesting, however, that Luther treated the connection of the body and salvation in Justus's case similarly as in the case of women's labor, discussed in Chapter III.

Luther not only expected strength of Justus, but also rationality in terms of being able to evaluate his own life objectively. This included gratitude for the things he still had left. Hence, Luther induced Justus to see all of the great gifts (*maximae dona*) he had in his life, with his wife being one of the best examples.<sup>90</sup> As Luther put it, "Grace above all grace [is] decency of a woman and appropriate weight is not [cannot be measured] for the moderate soul."<sup>91</sup> He continued: "The sedulous spouse

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87 Ebeling has also noted the topic of the body in the letter. See Ebeling 1997, 360–361.

88 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 324, 8–10.

89 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 324, 10–11.

90 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 324, 14–19.

91 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 324, 17–18. Compare Sir. 26:15.

one finds is better than precious stones.”<sup>92</sup> As such, Luther’s encouragement toward Justus resembled his overall evaluation of what a man should be thankful for. It is presented, for example, in his explanation of the Apostles’ Creed in 1529:

...I believe that I am a creature of God, that is, that He has given and still preserves my body, soul and life, small and large organs, all senses, reason and understanding and so forth, food and drink, clothes, living, wife and child, health, house and yard...<sup>93</sup>

According to Ebeling, Luther’s aim was not only to remind Justus of “what he had in his wife,” but also to encourage him to be thankful for not losing her in childbirth.<sup>94</sup>

Luther thus described Katharina as decent, moderate, and sedulous by using biblical references as his source. The representation of the ideal female is thus obvious in this letter. Whereas in the letter to John Agricola Luther had portrayed Elisabeth without references to the Bible, in the case of the Jonas couple Katharina was described by means of biblical phrases. Possibly this was mainly because of the context—in a *Trostbrief*, Luther regarded it most convenient to quote biblical images. Indeed, as Gerhard Ebeling has noted regarding *Seelsorgetexte*, in matters of life and death it was self-evident to refer primarily to biblical texts.<sup>95</sup> Luther’s aim was nonetheless to strengthen his friend, despite whether or not he regarded Katharina as ideal spouse in reality. The point was to bend Justus’s mind to God through the pondering of his gifts. Accordingly, Luther’s aim here resembles the way in which he told women, as discussed above, to be comforted and to put their trust in God. In other words, Luther’s pastoral aim was similar in all of these contexts.

However, in these cases the specific pastoral exhortation “to be comforted” was Luther’s way of responding particularly to women. It most probably had to do with his idea of women as being weaker than men, as Elisabeth Agricola’s case exemplifies so well. According to this belief, women required male efforts in order to stay well in spite of whether their problems were physical or spiritual in origin. This may have even meant that Luther held to be women incapable of surviving their troubles by themselves, without male intervention. The matter was not always one of women’s need, though, as the case of Katharina Jonas indicates. It was rather Luther’s construction of his own role as a pastoral agent, which he assumed both women and their husbands expected from him.

The notion of Luther’s construction of his pastoral role is further supported by looking at all the letters in which he used the exhortation “be comforted.” Taking into account all of his correspondence in the WA, it seems that this particular

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92 WA BR 5, no. 1571, 324, 18–19. Compare Ps. 31:10.

93 WA 30<sup>1</sup>, 183–184. *Large Catechism*.

94 Ebeling 1997, 362.

95 Ebeling 1997, 12.

wording was not used in a gender-specific way by Luther in general.<sup>96</sup> He used the formulation *seid getrost* in at least ten letters, of which five were written to men, four to women, and one to a married couple.<sup>97</sup> As for *getrost sein*, it was used seven times: four times to men, three to women.<sup>98</sup> The word *getrost* alone produces almost a hundred hits when searching Luther's correspondence in the WA; of these, at least fifteen, in addition with the already mentioned seventeen, use it in the sense to "be comforted." Again, most of these letters were written to males. Thereby the genderedness of the comforting is a feature concerning only these particular cases in Luther's correspondence.

The view of women as more emotional and susceptible to emotional outbursts than men dated back at least to the first Christian centuries.<sup>99</sup> It had to do with the Galenic view of gendered bodies—as women were colder and moister, they were more easily taken over by their emotions.<sup>100</sup> Emotionality was not merely a sign of the natural weakness of the female, however, as it could be understood as a virtue as well.<sup>101</sup> The opposites of feminine and masculine were nonetheless evident at the turn of the later Middle Ages and Early Modern Era, as Vaught has put it: "Men often express their emotions stoically or moderately... Women frequently grieve by weeping and wailing and traditionally perform the cultural work of mourning."<sup>102</sup> Karant-Nunn has also been of the opinion that the approach of the clergy before and during the Reformation favored these kinds of "binary models of the past" of women and men.<sup>103</sup> In the case of Luther's flock, given what has been discussed this far, such binary models of understanding what it was to be a woman or a man seem evident. Luther was ready to allow women their emotionality, and not only that, he had also adopted certain ways to talk to and about them in order to take their emotions seriously and to encourage them in their distress.

On the other hand, Luther's ideal male was tenacious, prudent, and robust (Justus), as well as reasonable and willing to support his wife in every calamity (John). Even though he presented this kind of ideal concerning manhood, the reality was, of course, a whole other thing. On the strength of Luther's remarks in the letters to Justus, for example, it seems that Justus needed rather to be guided

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96 I thank Professor Bo Kristian Holm for this notion.

97 The letters are: WA BR 3, no. 814; no. 909; WA BR 4, no. 1133; WA BR 6, no. 1820, no. 1876, no. 1964, no. 1975; WA BR 7, no. 2112, no. 2125; WA BR 10, no. 3733.

98 The letters are: WA BR 4, no. 1369; WA BR 5, no. 1529, no. 1551; WA BR 6, no. 1820; WA BR 8, no. 3211; WA BR 9, no. 3436, no. 3580.

99 Vaught 2008, 1; Karant-Nunn 2010, 159–160.

100 Vaught 2008, 1, note 1; 10. See also p. 3, note 5.

101 Karant-Nunn 2010, 160. Karant-Nunn mentions specifically Mary as an example of virtuous emotionality.

102 Vaught 2008, 2–3.

103 Karant-Nunn 2010, 184.

toward the ideal rather than presenting it by nature. It is noteworthy that when describing ideal masculinity, Luther did not use the aspect of virility, an argument he had often employed in his earlier texts. I believe it was due to a lack of necessity to bring up the subject during the late-1520s.

Jane Strohl has maintained that Luther's "anti-monastic polemic" was continuous in his early writings.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the issue of sexuality was one of the cornerstones of his rhetoric, as has become obvious in the examinations of this study as well. However, the predominance of the issue of cloister versus marriage had diminished during the years, or at least it had undergone transformations. Marjorie Plummer has argued that the justification and argumentation concerning the superiority of marriage had, by and large, three phases. Between 1521 and 1523, the argumentation was "theological or directed at church policy." During the mid-1520s, theological justification was converted into public action and sociopolitical argumentation. In the third phase, from late 1520s onward, marriage came to prove confessional identity on the levels of both rhetoric and action.<sup>105</sup> In other words, strict concentration on Scripture, including the essential lines from Genesis on human sexuality, formed the basis of the evangelicals' pursuit, while nevertheless giving space over time to new rhetoric and modes of action.

The way one needed to build her or his rhetoric was hence in continuous change as the outer situation altered. Naturally Luther was part of this change as well, which becomes apparent, for instance, in his concentration on other aspects of masculinity in his texts instead of mere sexuality—a feature that had dominated his language in the beginning of the 1520s. The change in his way of speaking becomes evident not only in his correspondence but also in his sermon *Marital Estate* from 1525 and his treatise *On Marriage Matters* from 1530.<sup>106</sup> Neither of these texts deals with the question of the male sexual drive, unlike, for instance, treatise *On Married Life* from 1522 wherein it was clearly one of Luther's themes. In the *Marital Estate*, as well as in *On Marriage Matters*, Luther did refer to God's order to multiply but did not go further in describing what it meant in practice,<sup>107</sup> as he had done in multiple ways in *On Married Life*. Consequently, in this historical situation Luther had no need to argue in every possible context for marriage and hence for the unavoidable sexual drive within men. Second, when it comes to his correspondence, he was writing personal letters to men who were already married and obviously shared his convictions regarding the nature of male sexuality and the importance of marriage.

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104 Strohl 2014, 370.

105 Plummer 2012, 214–215.

106 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 12–29 *Marital Estate*; WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 205–248. *On Marriage Matters*.

107 WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 18. WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 236.

## MALE MOURNING—SHAME OR MERIT?

Justus Jonas's responses to Luther confirm the representation of the male mourner. In a letter written before he was informed of the death of the newborn, Jonas rejoiced at the birth of his son,<sup>108</sup> but also referred to his former, tormented state of mind by stating:

I recognize, my father, my weakness (*meam infirmitatem*), my innermost sin and disbelief (*imo meum peccatum et incredulitatem*), and I am ashamed of the former grief of the death of the elder Frederick (*et pudet me illius moestitie de morte prioris Friderichi*).<sup>109</sup>

The display of grief was inappropriate and shameful for him as a man, as Jonas wrote. Luther and Jonas thus shared a somewhat similar understanding of the ideal of what it meant to be a man in the midst of sorrow. Their view resonated well with the contemporary understanding of how to behave in situations of loss.

In Luther's time, the primary feelings of the dying were supposed to be regret for one's sins, trust in the help of one's loved ones, and consent to God's will.<sup>110</sup> On the other hand, those in mourning were expected to "hold their expression and indeed their feeling itself within bonds," as noted, for instance, by the preacher Johannes Geiler von Kaisersberg (1445–1510). His view, which was presented by evangelicals as well, was that excessive grieving was inappropriate—after all, one had to honor God's will and accept his way.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, Karant-Nunn has evaluated that "stoically influenced leaders across the emerging denominations would look askance at wailing and tearing of hair."<sup>112</sup> However, the display of the loss outwardly was to a certain extent presupposed.<sup>113</sup> In the light of my previous discussions it seems probable that Karant-Nunn's notion holds truth especially in the case of male mourners.

It is possible that the shared views on proper male grieving encouraged Luther to write a pastoral exhortation to Jonas two weeks later, wherein he commanded him to be a man and to bear the burdens given by God. Jonas, for his part, seems to have taken Luther's words to heart, as can be read from his next letter to Luther, dated June 12. Jonas explicated his worry of his wife's "condition of body or health (*valetudine*)."<sup>114</sup> Therefore, as Jonas put it, he had asked Luther in his correspondence to write a comforting letter to her.<sup>115</sup> He returned to the subject at the end, repeating his wish that Luther would write "to my wife a consoling [letter] or other small letter (*consolatorias vel alias parvam epistolam*) [but try] not [to] renew the memory

108 WA BR 5, no. 1560, 302, 46–48. Justus Jonas to Luther (May 4, 1530).

109 WA BR 5, no. 1560, 302, 46–48. Justus Jonas to Luther (May 4, 1530).

110 Karant-Nunn 2010, 191.

111 Ibid., 193.

112 Ibid., 195. See also p. 186.

113 Ibid., 192.

114 WA BR 5, no. 1587, 355, 11. Justus Jonas to Luther (June 12, 1530). *Valetudine* could also be translated as "good health" or "illness."

115 WA BR 5, no. 1587, 355–356, 11–12.



of the son's death."<sup>116</sup> Jonas also implied that he had adopted Luther's suggestion of the correct way to react to difficulties, taking them as God's will—although he expressed that he was also in need of consoling due to "this sad calamity."<sup>117</sup>

In this particular letter, the understanding of the man as the caretaker of the woman becomes evident. In this way, it serves as a straightforward allusion to Luther's exhortation of correct manly behavior in the midst of sorrow. It seems, however, that the letter in question cannot be the first one that Jonas wrote to Luther after hearing of his son's death, since he alluded in the plural to the letters in which he asked Luther to console his wife.

The editor of the WA has read Jonas as not receiving Luther's *Trostbrief* of May 19, due to his remark that he still was expecting Luther's response.<sup>118</sup> This would nullify my notion of the visibility of the influence of Luther's statements on Jonas's letter. However, if we assume that this was not the first letter that Jonas had written to Luther after his son's death, as I suggest above, but it had been preceded by letters written possibly at the end of May or the beginning of June, Jonas would have been referring to a later response from Luther which he had not received, rather than that of May 19.

The edited collection of Justus Jonas's letters does not contain letters from between May 4 and June 12.<sup>119</sup> However, in the WA there is a reference to a short, hastily written letter from Jonas to Luther on May 22 that has not been preserved.<sup>120</sup> It is, of course, obvious that part of his letters disappeared—like those of many of his contemporaries, including, for instance, Luther and von Bora. Moreover, it would be rather conspicuous that Jonas did not write to either Luther or anyone else, not even his wife, soon after hearing about his son's death. Thus, when noting in June that he was still waiting for Luther's response, there is a strong possibility that Jonas referred to a reply to his May 22 letter.

Neil Leroux has examined the central aspects of mourning in Luther's writings and made some overall conclusions, summarized by Michael Parsons in the following way:

God, who knows better than we do, has taken the loved one; God created us as feeling, loving creatures, who will naturally grieve over loss; God, Christ and the Word are the best consolers; a faithful death is better than a miserable life; there is a need for moderation in grief.<sup>121</sup>

Leroux has not treated gender as a category of his analysis, and neither has Karrant-Nunn, whose findings were discussed above. From the viewpoint of the gen-

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116 WA BR 5, no. 1587, 358–359, 134–135.

117 WA BR 5, no. 1587, 356, 13.

118 WA BR 5, no. 1587, 356, 14. See also note 6.

119 BWJJ I, 1884. See esp. pages 146–149.

120 See WA BR 5, no. 1581, 346, note 6. To Philipp Melanchthon (June 2/3, 1530). The letter from Jonas had been sent together with Melanchthon's letter, which is no. 1576 in WA.

121 Leroux 2007, 183–84, 188; Parsons 2013, 1.

deredness of grief, the last notion of Leroux is particularly significant: Luther's exhortation to moderation and self-discipline in the midst of mourning is especially evident in his letters to Justus. Furthermore, one could expect that the same ideal would apply to other men as well.

Two interesting comparisons can thus be made between Luther's discussion of Justus and male mourning as part of the male way of being. The first of these is Luther's own grief due to his father's death on May 29, 1530.<sup>122</sup> Luther wrote to Melanchthon in the beginning of June, telling him of the death. This was also one of the letters in which he complained about not hearing anything from his colleagues in Augsburg.<sup>123</sup> At the end of the letter, Luther lamented that he had been "thrown into sorrow (*in luctum coniecit*)" on account of his father's death.<sup>124</sup> Remembrance and pity had shaken his "innermost parts of the body (*viscera*)."<sup>125</sup> The Latin term *viscera* can also be translated as "flesh," "internal organs," or "soft fleshly body parts." At the very end of the text, Luther told Melanchthon that "I [am] now too sad [and] do not write [anymore] for it is appropriate and pious (*dignum est et pium*) for me to mourn as the son of such a father (*filium talem parentem*)."<sup>126</sup>

The loss that Luther experienced affected his whole being, even to the innermost parts of his body, as he himself put it. This depiction comes close to his notion after the Jonas couple lost their baby that God's word became fulfilled in the Christian's body in a very concrete way. Unlike in his wordings to Justus, however, Luther did not emphasize the need to be strong and take the blow stoically. On the contrary, he gave himself permission to grieve, and he justified it with his position as the dead man's son. It was not only permissible for him to mourn but also "appropriate and pious." In this evaluation of his role as a mourner, Luther joined in the contemporary opinion, discussed above, that an outer demonstration of bereavement was justified, even required.

It is possible to get further information on Luther's expression of masculine grief on the basis of the remarks of an eyewitness. Veit Dietrich (1506–1549), Luther's colleague who stayed with him at Coburg, wrote to von Bora on June 19, telling of Luther's way of being concerning his father. According to Dietrich:

[Luther] has forgotten his father's [death] within two days, although it was very hard for him. Immediately when he looked at Hans Reinken's (Reinicke's) letter, he said to me: "Now then, my father is also dead!" After that he quickly took his Psalter, went into [his] chamber, and cried so greatly (*weint ihm genug*) that his head was hurting the next day. Since then he has let nothing to be seen [of his emotions] (*[s]int hat er sich nichts lassen mehr merken*).<sup>127</sup>

122 WA BR 5, no. 1584, 351, note 10. To Philipp Melanchthon (June 5, 1530).

123 WA BR 5, no. 1584, 350–351.

124 WA BR 5, no. 1584, 351, 22.

125 WA BR 5, no. 1584, 351, 26.

126 WA BR 5, no. 1584, 351, 33–34.

127 WA BR 5, no. 1595b, 379, 14–19. Veit Dietrich to Katharina von Bora (June 19, 1530).

In this expression of grief, Luther followed the expectations of his day—or at least Dietrich’s narration of him describes this. Luther showed his loss outwardly, but pulled himself together after a single day of excessive mourning. One can say, then, that Luther not only showed his grief, but that his performance even went close to what was inappropriate, as could be read from Dietrich’s words. However, this lapse of excessive weeping changed into a stoic approach, which, if we believe Karant-Nunn’s analysis, was the more appropriate way of being for a man. Such a stoic appearance made Dietrich even suppose that Luther had forgotten the death, as he did not betray any of his emotions.

Although extreme grieving was not enjoined, also present were models of masculinity which stressed imitation of Jesus in his Passion and which allowed males to shed tears and express agony. These did not lead to a sacrifice of one’s masculinity, but instead represented provisional acts of devotion, which had nothing to do with the proper gendered behavior in daily life. Though a vestige from the Middle Ages, these were also cherished by one of Luther’s contemporaries on the Catholic side, Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), and, accordingly, by the Jesuit order.<sup>128</sup>

The other comparison to Justus Jonas’s case that deals explicitly with male fragility is offered in Luther’s letters to him during the early fall of 1529, which dealt with Philipp Melanchthon’s loss of his two-year-old son.<sup>129</sup> Luther asked Justus to write a comforting letter to Philipp, who was “a man of the most fragile and pathetic heart (*hominem tenerrimi et patheticissimi cordis*).”<sup>130</sup> A couple of weeks later he told Justus that Philipp was still grieving,<sup>131</sup> and he devoted himself to ponder manhood through their mourning friend. Luther mused, “If only all Timons [all such men of Timon’s kind, that is, hermits without families and public offices] would rather be forced to bear [such burdens] which humbled them...”<sup>132</sup> He contrasted Philipp, one sinful and weak man (*una, etiam peccatrix et infirma*) with “all the thousands of private Jeromes, Hilaries and Macariuses.”<sup>133</sup> Not only Philipp but also John Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, and Luther himself were more laudable than the ceremonial and celibate saints, whom they boasted about but who were not worthy to even untie the shoelaces of these *Hausväter*.<sup>134</sup>

Whereas in the case of Justus’s loss Luther had stressed the importance of staying strong and carrying the burden wisely, Philipp’s weakness became the cor-

128 Karant-Nunn 2010, 184–185. For imitating Jesus in the Middle Ages, see, e.g., Bynum 1984.

129 Philipp’s son Georg had died August 15, 1529. Bebermeyer 1934a, 132.

130 WA BR 5, no. 1462, 132, 11. To Justus Jonas (August 17, 1529).

131 WA BR 5, no. 1472, 144, 8. To Justus Jonas (beginning of September, 1529).

132 WA BR 5, no. 1472, 144, 9.

133 WA BR 5, no. 1472, 144, 11–12.

134 WA BR 5, no. 1472, 144, 13–15. Compare Mark 1:7.

nerstone of Luther’s discussion. In both cases, however, the matter was closely tied to the proper way of being, with corporality being an essential factor in the discussion. Philipp was fragile, pathetic, and weak—and as such he was described by means of characteristics that Luther usually treated as feminine. This did not lead to a conclusion of Melanchthon’s femininity, but quite the contrary. Faithful to his manner of rhetoric, Luther juxtaposed ideal manhood, in this case that of Melanchthon, with the undesired way of being a male. He did this by bringing into the discussion *Hausväter*, on the one hand, and early church theologians, on the other. His juxtapositions of the two groups are so many and so strict that they can be represented as a table:

Hausväter: Melanchthon, Justus, Bugenhagen, Luther	“Church Fathers”: Timon, Jerome, Hilary, Macarius
One	Thousand
With a family	Unmarried, childless
Sexually active	Celibate
Public work	Seclusion
Honesty: sinful and weak	Peacockery: ceremonial manners
Comparison with Jesus	Comparison with John the Baptist

Table 2. The differences between fathers and “fathers.” The table is based especially on lines 11–16 of the letter.

In Luther’s line of thought, Philipp and his associates represented preferable men since their way of being as a whole was in accordance with God’s will. Not the least important factor behind Luther’s assessment was, of course, their being evangelicals and coworkers. They admitted their bodily nature, and thus they became respectable *Hausväter*. Whereas virility was not included in Luther’s discourse in the cases of Justus and John, in this letter it was suitable for him to take it into account along with other factors. Furthermore, these *Hausväter* took care of their families, working by the sweat of their brow in public office. They were everything that a Christian should be: honest about their sinfulness and weakness before God and other people. As such, they were implicitly compared to Jesus, which the notion of shoelaces also proves: the hermits were, like John the Baptist, not worthy to tie them. Melanchthon’s inherent fragility did not make him unmanly, since he fulfilled the appropriate gender role as a male, despite the weaknesses of his nature. Hence, Melanchthon became a prime example of humanity.

Contrary to real fathers, the early church theologians, for whom the honorific “father” was widely used, represented features that were both unmanly and unchristian. They were men who refuted the path of truly Christian men, a path

which met the needs of the male body and was ordered by God. In other words, in this context as elsewhere, Luther's ideal of manhood was deeply intertwined with his idea of the proper way to be a Christian. Luther thus continued to present quite straightforwardly the same ideas about the proper way to live in the flesh that he had presented during the earlier part of the 1520s. The need to comment on the theme arose, in any case, this time from private rather than public needs.

The picture that Luther drew of Melanchthon was thus not even close to the stoic ideal of suppressing one's emotions, which seems to have been his principle in regard to Justus Jonas and himself, for instance. How was he able to completely change his way of discussing masculinity, much less do it plausibly? One explanation could be the influence of several philosophies on Luther. Reformation leaders such as Luther and Calvin, as well as humanists such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, were not so much influenced by Stoicism as Augustinianism. In regard to emotions, Augustine held, similar to Aristotle, that emotions should be moderated rather than oppressed and thus are given the power to lead one to virtue. Their approach to emotion was thus more positive than that of Stoicism.<sup>135</sup> By and large, some models of masculinity of Luther's time stressed the importance of emotional sincerity and making one's despair or empathy visible.<sup>136</sup>

In addition, Luther's special relationship with Melanchthon is something that particularly needs to be taken into account when discussing his evaluation of his comrade. In terms of their friendship, Luther regarded himself as the more robust one. Melanchthon—described in modern research as Hardy in comparison with the stout Laurel of Luther<sup>137</sup>—was somewhat weak and sickly, not only in terms of his outer appearance but also his mental composition. From early on, Luther “developed protective and tender feelings toward Melanchthon,” as Ulinka Rublack has put it. The difference between the two men—exemplified by Melanchthon's fragility, which Luther's acknowledged and was, moreover, willing to defend<sup>138</sup>—accordingly affected his way of treating him in the letter under discussion.

Luther's way of treating masculinity in different situations tells of his contextuality, which has become evident in study thus far.<sup>139</sup> As Timothy Wengert has shown, Luther chose his discursive means according to each situation, including his pastoral approach, in order to get his message across most efficiently.<sup>140</sup> As such, this

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135 Vaught 2008, 12–13.

136 Rublack 2002, 5.

137 Roper 2012, 5.

138 Rublack 2005, 35–36.

139 The notion of Luther's contextuality is made also, for instance, in Lull 2003, 39; Cortright 2011, 2, 180; Gerle 2015, 24.

140 Wengert 2009, 23.

notion can be estimated to be valid in terms of Luther's writings as a whole, not merely in terms of *Seelsorgetexte*, as has become evident through the analyses in the study.

In discussing masculinity, Luther defined and redefined manhood over and over again. Thus, for instance, he made use of the softer models of masculinity in Melanchthon's case, while he stressed self-moderation and self-control in the discussions concerning Agricola and Jonas. As such, this supports the remarks of Jennifer Vaught and Ruth Mazo Karras that instead of a singular form of masculinity or a few hegemonic classifications, there emerged a multiplicity of different masculinities during the late Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern Era.<sup>141</sup> Even if Luther supported the one ideal of *Hausvater* as regards to all contemporary men, and tried to convince his audience of the properness of that role, *within* the role he in practice allowed men different sorts of ways of being.

### **3. STRUGGLING TO MAINTAIN THE GENDER SYSTEM: LUTHER'S JUDGMENT OF A REVERSED GENDER HIERARCHY**

#### **INHERITED FROM EVE: MALICE AS FEMALE NATURE**

The third and final case of this chapter is that of the Roth couple.<sup>142</sup> It is chosen to broaden the picture of the proper gendered way of being and a properly constructed gender system, as Luther depicted those. Stephan Roth (1492–1546) and Ursula Krüger (?–?) were married on May 11, 1524 in Wittenberg, where they lived until 1528. On February 15, 1528, however, Stephan began as a notary (*Stadtschreiber*) in Zwickau. He expected his wife to move there with him, but Ursula was not ready to follow Stephan, which caused such disagreement between the couple that Stephan asked his wife to consult Luther on the matter. It has been suggested that behind the wife's refusal was her unwillingness to leave both her native town and her relatives, her discontent with her husband's new office, or worries about her health. Nevertheless, she did not follow her husband's advice and thus did not turn to Luther. Provoked by this, Luther wrote a letter to Stephan in which he discussed the situation.<sup>143</sup>

Luther had known Stephan Roth since 1523, when the latter arrived in Wittenberg. Roth quickly became friends not only with Luther but also Bugenhagen and other Wittenberg theologians. He began to translate Luther's and Bugenhagen's writings, and he transcribed Luther's sermons. In 1526, Roth's first edition of Luther's sermons was published, and during the following years he kept on editing various postils. The sermons were not always Luther's own nor were they edited

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141 Karras 2003, 2–3; Vaught 2008, 7.

142 The couple is shortly addressed in e.g. Roper 1983, 38.

143 Bebermeyer & Clemen 1933, 442; Tappert 1960, 277.

well enough from the Wittenberg theologians' point of view, however. Luther was also dissatisfied with Roth's work at least from 1528 onwards, which was partly the reason for increasing tensions between the two men, as well as for their final falling out sometime during the 1530s.<sup>144</sup> Information about Luther's relationship with Ursula Roth is not extant, despite references to her in his letters.

The letter in question is signed not only by Luther but also by John Bugenhagen. The latter may not have written the letter with Luther but merely signed it, as Tappert has suggested.<sup>145</sup> Karant-Nunn, on the contrary, has been of the opinion that the letter was written together but made to appear as if it was only written by Luther.<sup>146</sup> Karant-Nunn's explanation seems a little far-fetched: why would the men have written and signed the letter together, yet tried to make it look like Luther's alone? Considering the subject of the letter, which was the misbehavior of the members of the Wittenberg congregation, the letter itself can be regarded as disciplinary in tone. Bugenhagen was the minister of St. Mary's, the parish church of Wittenberg, and for this reason his participation in the letter-writing becomes evident. As the matter involved church discipline, Bugenhagen's name had to be on the letter to give it the authority needed. The letter is written in the first person, which, in addition to the nature of the letter, supports Tappert's position—that Bugenhagen did not actively take part in writing the letter but supported its composition and thus signed it.

In the letter, Luther used similar phrasing for Ursula that he used for his own wife, that is, "your lord and mistress (*domina et hera tua*)."<sup>147</sup> The honorific was meant, however, to be interpreted in a contrary manner, as is revealed from the salutation and the beginning of the text:

Grace and peace in Christ with authority in your wife (*cum auctoritate in uxorem tuam*)!  
Your lord and mistress has not yet come to me, my Stephan. Her obedience toward you  
(*obedientia eius erga te*) annoys me well enough.<sup>148</sup>

The need to salute Roth with a reminder of who held the authority in a family reveals the overall tone of Luther's letter, as do the dishonorifics. The word *obedientia* was also meant to be understood in a contrary fashion, as becomes clear from the context. It referred not to the wife's obedience but, on the contrary, her disobedience, which was a cause of annoyance to Luther. Ursula did not, as Luther implied, act according to her gender role as Stephan's wife. The power relations and the hierarchy of the couple thus became the key issue of the letter from its first lines.

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144 Mayes & Langebartels 2013, XVII–XXII.

145 Tappert 1960, 277.

146 Karant-Nunn 1982, 29.

147 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 442, 2. To Stephan Roth (April 12, 1528).

148 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 442, 1–3.

Ursula and female nature were represented as a dichotomy of two possible options, which defined female behavior. Either she was weak or, worse, wicked:

It is, however, easy to distinguish whether it is weakness (*infirmitas*) or wickedness (*malitia*). Weakness must be tolerated, wickedness restrained. With weakness [a human being] is able to learn and listen, at least once in twelve hours. Malice has the persistence to resist and persevere. Certainly when she realizes (*sentit*) that you understand (*a te intelligi*) malice to be weakness instead, is it a wonder that she becomes the worst?<sup>149</sup>

Luther had already offered the idea of the woman as weak by nature in several of his texts, and he returned to the subject with Ursula and Stephan. A few years back in the *Marital Estate*, for instance, Luther had used an allegory of a woman preferring to wear a soft veil around her head instead of a rough one. Consequently, she should speak to the man, who was her head, “sweet, friendly words ... and not crude, foul, scolding words like the wicked women (*die boesen Weiber*) do...”<sup>150</sup>

Ideally, the woman let the man bend her like a vintner who bent the grape vine, so that she might avoid “the great and rough hits and punches” in their relationship.<sup>151</sup> According to law and custom, violence was the husband’s prerogative, as he was the dominant one.<sup>152</sup> It seems that Luther regarded it as the woman’s responsibility to act in the relationship in such a way that the man could adopt his proper role as *Hausvater* and not, for instance, exert himself in practice through violence. As weakness was a common female characteristic, however, men had no choice but to deal with it, as Luther noted in the Roth case. This discussion alludes straightforwardly to the idea of woman as a weak grape vine.

The capability to comprehend male guidance with regularity yet very seldom—as Luther described Ursula—implies a view of woman as slow and stupid. Luther did not emphasize these kinds of characteristics in terms of the other women presented in this study. Yet, Luther had suggested in the *Sermons on Genesis* that Eve fell because of her wish to be clever, the notion of female nature which was closest to Ursula’s case. In this way, it seems that referring to female stupidity—which Luther did in relation to Eve and the women at the tomb as well—served him as a way of dealing with female stubbornness in this particular case. A disobedient woman deserved to be judged to have weak mental abilities.

A juxtaposition between women and men was made in this context by Luther’s choice of words—Ursula realized (*sentio*), while Stephan understood (*intelligo*). The word *sentio* refers to natural instincts, as it were, and it can be translated as “feeling,” “experiencing,” or “seeing.” The word *intelligo*, however, refers to understanding or realizing in an intentional, intelligent or wise manner. The dichoto-

149 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 443, 14–19.

150 WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 27. *Marital Estate*.

151 WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 27. *Marital Estate*.

152 Parsons 2011, 83.



my of women representing nature, on the one hand, and men representing culture, on the other, may be beneath these statements. Luther nevertheless also referred to Stephan with the verb *sentio* in other lines of the letter,<sup>153</sup> which indicates that the verbs were not used in a gender-specific way. It could be argued that in Luther's rhetoric, however, Stephan was able to not only perceive through his natural instincts but also understand things better through his superior type of intelligence, whereas his wife was capable merely of the former.

Luther also discussed women's gullibility in *On Marriage Matters*, wherein he warned maids and wives alike not to wantonly believe the sweet words of a seducer (*die dirnen und weibs personen ... nicht so leichtfertiglich den guten worten des beschleffers glauben*) but rather to trust in God's word.<sup>154</sup> Luther juxtaposed God's words and human words by using biblical expressions: "Whoever trusts in human beings (*menschen*) will err," and again, "He who trusts in human beings (*menschen*) shall encounter misfortune."<sup>155</sup> Luther often stressed that God's words and the man's words were the same from the woman's point of view, and she should thus regard the man as the source of knowledge regarding God and His will. This becomes evident, for example, in his discussions on Eve and Adam (Eve heard God's words through Adam) or in his advice that a woman in labor should be comforted via her husband's words (that obviously were closer to God's intent than old wives' tales), examined in Chapter III. In this context, not only women's possible, or probable, stupidity and gullibility were highlighted but also men's fraudulence. However, as Luther's use of the biblical proverbs proves, it was more the fault of the women themselves if they believed the seducer. Thus, he presented contemporary women in the same light as Eve in other contexts: as stupid and incapable to comprehend the clear word of God.

Luther's choice of the concept *Dirne* also speaks of this stance. In *On Marriage Matters*, he used two concepts of an unmarried woman: *Dirne* and *Magd*. The former was used more often than the latter in contexts that, for example, spoke about a woman who had been in premarital sexual relationship with a man.<sup>156</sup> As noted in Chapter IV, *Dirne* was also used more commonly in the evangelical rhetoric as a synonym for the word "whore."

Besides weakness and stupidity, the idea of women representing malice was Luther's other viewpoint of Ursula. Judging from the former passage, Luther suspected that she was not weak but wicked. In the sermon *Marital Estate* in 1525, Luther had also approached the theme of female wickedness by stating that men

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153 See, for instance, lines 21–22.

154 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 220. *On Marriage Matters*.

155 Ibid. Compare Ps. 40:4; Ps. 118:8.

156 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 218, 219, 220, 222, 228 *et passim*.

should understand the value of matrimony despite the possible difficulties with their wives. In this context, Luther noted that if men had this attitude, “no wife would be so ugly, so wicked, so mischievous, so poor, [and] so sick that they [the husbands] would not find heart’s joy.”<sup>157</sup> The other way around, the wife who did not accept her proper gendered way of being was, as Luther put it, ugly, mean and ill-behaved, poor, and—to top it all off—unhealthy.

Luther’s message in the text above was that wives should be tolerated in their weakness but also in their malice, which has a slightly different emphasis than the letter to Stephan. What has to be noted as well is that the wording in the *Marital Estate* is identical to that of *On Married Life* from 1522.<sup>158</sup> Thus, his view had not changed in this respect over the years. In fact, the similarity of these two texts has remarked on in Chapter III.2, as well in the context of labor. It is obvious that Luther used his earlier text when composing the later sermon. This is an important notion from the perspective of detecting possible changes in Luther’s ideas: it seems that in 1522 and in the beginning of 1525 he was very much on the same track regarding many of his general ideas about women. The genre of these particular texts may also explain the similarities, of course; the audience for both can be seen as identical.

Malice could also refer to being more readily misguided by the devil. In the case of the Roths, Luther accused Stephan of opening the window for the devil in his wife, namely, in the weaker vessel (*in misero vasculo*).<sup>159</sup> In this respect, malice is an idea which does not occur regularly in the sources used in this study, except in the case of Eve in the *Sermons on Genesis*. In that context, Luther remarked that she was seduced by the devil since she, unlike Adam, was too weak and simple to resist. An equivalent view can be found in a sermon from 1526: “...the woman is more foolish than the man (*mulier est stultior viro*) ... women are more often liable to the devil’s superstitions. Like Eve.”<sup>160</sup> The idea of female malice was commonly held in the sixteenth century. When discussing exorcism in sixteenth-century Germany, Lyndal Roper has noted that the devil’s appearance in a woman was believed to be proven by “the disruptions of normal womanly behavior,” that is, a chaste and obedient demeanor. Women’s weaker nature made them easier targets for the devil’s temptations. Consequently, their bodies were more naturally a dwelling place for the devil than those of men.<sup>161</sup>

157 WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 18. *Marital Estate*.

158 Compare WA 10<sup>ll</sup>, 295. *On Married Life*: “...keyn weyb so hesßlich, ßo boße, ßo unartig, so arm, so kranck seyn, daran sie nicht lust des hertzen funden darumb, das sie ymer dar gotte seyn werck und geschepffe...” with WA 17<sup>l</sup>, 18. *Marital Estate*: “...kein weib so heßlich, so boese, so unartig, so arm, so kranck sein, daran sie nicht lust des hertzen fuenden, darumb das sie jmerdar Gott sein werck und geschoepff...”

159 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 443, 19–20. Compare I Pet. 3:7: “In a similar way, you husbands must live with your wives in an understanding manner, as with a most delicate vessel [lit. the weaker vessel].”

160 WA 16, 551b. Sermon on Exodus.

161 Roper 1997, 190. See also Monter 1987, 212–281; Rublack 1998, 250–251.

From Luther's point of view, Eve's daughters were just like their ancestress, who was not satisfied with her own part but caused problems by trying to gain things beyond her. Luther explicated this, for instance, in the *Marital Estate*, wherein he reflected on women:

And I believe that women ... suffer more willingly and more patiently [in childbearing] than [they stand] the thing that they have to be subordinate and obedient to men (*den Männern unterthan und gehorsam sein*), so readily women master and rule *by nature* (*herrschen und regiren die Weiber von natur*), similar to their first mother Eve.<sup>162</sup>

In comparison, Luther also referred to the female nature being problematic in his letter to Katharina Jonas. When guessing the sex of the forthcoming baby of Katharina and Justus, he supposed that it was a girl, since "they make themselves so seldom, block themselves [i.e., do not want to be born and come into daylight], and for them will a big house be narrow."<sup>163</sup> He also remarked, "The mothers do similarly, and they make the poor husband and the world also narrow."<sup>164</sup> Luther thus implied troubles with having a baby girl but also female nature as a whole; the conduct of mothers further supported his insight of the faults of the female sex.

The idea of essentiality was the way in which Luther's contemporaries regarded what being a woman or a man was about, as Wiesner-Hanks has pointed out. The premise was that certain characteristics were not socially constructed, that is, learned behavior, but belonged to a certain kind of body, female or male.<sup>165</sup> Ebeling has argued that Luther's notion was based on experience of childbirth, but the connection with female nature was his "funny association (*witzigen Assoziationen*)."<sup>166</sup> The attributes Luther connected to the female sex can indeed be interpreted as either humorous notions or a serious attempt to explain, for example, why delivery had not started already, and ruminations of female nature were based on that. It is possible that Luther genuinely thought that giving birth to a girl was a longer and harder process than delivering a boy. Thus, female nature was troublesome and dissatisfied from the very beginning of life. Hence, in Luther's rhetoric this kind of female way of being was not socially constructed but belonged essentially to womanhood.

The editor of the WA has explained Luther's idea of mothers making the poor husband and world narrow as signifying the following: "Also for the mothers is the world not beautiful and large enough, as they always complain to their poor husbands: when will they be granted full freedom of movement?"<sup>167</sup> There is no indication as to what exactly the editor is basing his interpretation on, for it seems to

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162 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 26. *Marital Estate*. Italics mine.

163 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, 12–13.

164 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, 13–14.

165 Wiesner-Hanks 2011, 277.

166 Ebeling 1997, 357.

167 WA BR 5, no. 1551, 284, note 12.

be saying quite a lot about such an indicative remark of Luther. According to this reading, “making narrow” alludes to women’s demand to be freer in relation to men and, as such, it refers to gendered questions of women’s place in society in the interpretation of creation and the fall, for instance, among Luther’s contemporaries.

My suggestion is to do a simpler reading: Luther referred to female nature as it represented itself in its worst—whatever that would have meant in each context—thereby putting their husbands but also all others into a position where pleasing them was not possible. Thus, I would not connect the quotation merely to the issue of female (in)dependency but more broadly to all the problems that, in Luther’s understanding, women could cause from the viewpoint of men. In Katharina’s letter, then, Luther generalized female nature to be troublesome even as a prenatal fetus. Perhaps his tone was half-humorous, as in his letters to his own wife, discussed formerly.

Unlike in the case of von Bora, however, in Katharina’s or Ursula’s case the theory of a joking relationship cannot be applied directly, as that kind of a relationship demanded a certain amount of intimacy between the parties. In addition, it would be an understatement of Luther’s thinking to regard these kinds of notions of female stubbornness merely as jokes, as if he really did not mean it. Humor is something one must carefully prove to be the mood of a written text, since detecting it is a difficult if not almost impossible task. Otherwise, when regarding a certain statement as a funny association, as Ebeling has done, there is a danger of the analysis diminishing the weight of such a passage.

Female nature was, or should be, essentially subordinated and obedient due to both creation and the fall, as Luther had discussed already in the beginning of the 1520s. All in all, Luther presented essential, inborn gender features in two ways: as ideals concerning womanhood or manhood, or, conversely, as a means of explaining incorrect behavior. In Ursula’s case, it was about the latter. Even though Luther essentially favored the idea of female subordination, he also acknowledged a desire of women to have the power that contemporary women had inherited from Eve. This desire was against God’s order and it highlighted the female sex as an embodiment of the flesh, as opposed to the spirit, with flesh signifying the “principle of disruption in the human psyche,” to follow Karma Lochrie.<sup>168</sup> Luther explained Ursula’s undesired behavior by alluding to general female nature, not so much in the sense of gendered dichotomies or expected behavior, for instance, as in the sense of his understanding of the female as flesh, the gender with greater disruption. Taking into account the whole of the letter with its allegories and word choices, it can be said that Ursula represented for Luther one of the wicked women. She did not allow her husband to bend her and, consequently, Stephan did not dare to treat her as he should have in order to meet the demands of the gender system that Luther tried to enforce.

168      Lochrie 1991, 3–4.

## IMPROPER MASCULINITY: SOFTNESS AND IRRESPONSIBILITY

But why was it actually Stephan's fault that the devil was let into the Roth household, as Luther claimed in his letter? It was because he should have been the master of his wife, not the other way around. Luther blamed him for being too soft, even effeminate:

Next I'm beginning to be rather annoyed with you, who have due to your soul's softness (*mollitie*, lit. softness, weakness, effeminacy) made tyranny from Christian servitude, with which you should help your wife. Now it seems to be your fault, too, that she dares [to challenge] you in everything. ... [I]t is too much that it [God's honor in man] is entirely removed, destroyed, and made into nothing.<sup>169</sup>

Luther's accusation was in line with what he had sketched out in previous years concerning the gender hierarchy. In fact, he outlined this in a similar fashion in his *Booklet of Advice* the following year in 1529:

Wives are subject to their husbands as to the Lord, since the man is the woman's head in the same way as Christ is also the head of the congregation, and He is the Savior of its body (*seines leibes heiland*). Just as the congregation is subordinate to Christ, wives are subordinate to their husbands in all matters.<sup>170</sup>

Despite the rather different genres of these texts, one being a letter to a colleague and the other general advice to pastors for marrying couples, their premise concerning the gender system is the same. This suggests that, in this regard, Luther's viewpoints were similar in theory and in practice. As the letter was disciplinary in nature, however, it rather self-evidently mirrored Luther's overall stance toward the gender system.

In principle, Stephan also supported the view of the marital relationship based on the man's leadership and the woman's obedience. He had translated and published Erasmus of Rotterdam's colloquy on marriage (*Coniugium*) in 1524, which included directions for a disobedient wife. Luther probably knew of this work of Roth.<sup>171</sup> He reminded Stephan that for married men, Christian servitude signified the capability to meet expectations as *pater familias* and keep their wives under control. This was not to oppress wives, but to help them in their own weakness of nature, discussed above. Hence, male softness and submission were not only effeminate, but also signified tyranny toward weak women who were in need of male dominion.

The idea of male obligation to take care of the wife, which was expressed by Luther as regards the Agricolas and in his theoretical writings, was an integral part of Luther's discussion concerning the Roth couple as well. It can also be found in his *Sermon on the Sixth Commandment* in 1528, wherein husbands were expressly presented as caretakers of their wives.<sup>172</sup> The opposite of a caretaker was a "loose

169 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 442, 3–6, 11–12. Luther's disappointment could be expressed fiercely in his letters. See, for instance, Mikkola 2014b, 95–96.

170 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 79. *Booklet of Advice*. Compare Eph. 5:22–24.

171 Karant-Nunn 1982, 29.

172 WA 30<sup>I</sup>, 37. *Sermon on the Sixth Commandment*.

rascal,” according to Luther in *On Marriage Matters*: “...loose rascals (*lose buben*) wander and run through the country, from one town to the other. And when one [of those] sees a maid that pleases him, he [becomes] aroused...”<sup>173</sup> These rascals seduced women by promising them marriage, only to move on in order to find a new one to trick. They practiced, according to Luther, “great, shameful vice.”<sup>174</sup> Yet *ein bube* was not just a young, unmarried man, as I have already noted in Chapter IV.1. One could also be called a rascal if he left his wife and children and came back after a few years, expecting to be taken back.<sup>175</sup> As a point of comparison, it has to be noted that according to Luther, women, whom Luther called *buerbinn*, could practice *bueberey* by “running here and there” and taking husbands.<sup>176</sup> Nonetheless, female rascals were not discussed any further in the treatise or in other texts for that matter—as arguably they were not a common social problem, like loose men.

*Ein bube* was a man who did not live according to social or gender norms. He endangered his masculinity by being morally and sexually suspicious and by refusing to do his proper part as a member of a certain community. This discussion continues Luther’s former ruminations from the beginning of the 1520s. Luther’s view in 1530 thus seems to have been that a rascal was not capable of fulfilling the role that society expected of an adult man. Accordingly, he could not be honored by others either.

Pastors, to whom Luther’s treatise was dedicated,<sup>177</sup> were responsible for warning their people, especially burghers and farmers, that they did not give their daughters to “unknown fellows or men (*unbekandten gesellen oder manne*).”<sup>178</sup> This notion reveals a social hierarchy between men: the pastor was but a shepherd, yet also an educated man among other men of his community. The mention of burghers and farmers highlights the hierarchy based on education and social standing. However, not only pastors but also farmers and burghers became opposites of unknown, potentially morally dangerous men, who did not have a status in a certain community. The latter were thus the lowest rank of the men mentioned in this context, as they had not claimed a place among respectable men.

In the case of Stephan Roth, Luther placed himself in the role of the shepherd, as he was disciplining the other man. In this role, he treated the proper, tripartite order of God, men, and women by means of wording that could even be interpreted as ridiculing both of the Roths. Namely, Luther used a metaphor of a donkey and its master—Stephan had allowed his wife to become disobedient in the same manner as a donkey who was overfed:

173 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 227. *On Marriage Matters*.

174 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 227. *On Marriage Matters*.

175 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 242. *On Marriage Matters*.

176 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 227. *On Marriage Matters*.

177 Dedication in WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 205. *On Marriage Matters*.

178 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 227. *On Marriage Matters*.

“Certainly, when you understood that the donkey runs riot because of [overfeeding of] fodder (*asinum pabulo lascivire*), that is, your wife is arrogant due to your kindness and obedience (*indulgentia et obsequio tuo ferocire*)...”<sup>179</sup>

The key issue was to claim one’s manly prerogatives. It was justified not only from the wife’s point of view but also that of God, whose honor the husband reflected with his position and correct behavior.<sup>180</sup> Stephan’s duty was first and foremost toward God, as Luther remarked, not to obey his wife. Luther had noted already several years earlier that due to the fall, women did not have the possibility to be their own masters, since they were completely under the dominion of men, as discussed above.

In the *Marital Estate*, for instance, Luther highlighted that the woman’s proper place in the post-lapsarian world was to be under the dominion of the man, not to act according to her own will. Had there been no fall, she would have been man’s equal in ruling the world (*zu gleich regiret und geherschet als sein mit gehuelffe*) since she was created a person with free will.<sup>181</sup> As has become clear on the basis of scrutinizing Luther’s theoretical texts, however, in the fallen world female dominance should not be tolerated, as it overturned the gender hierarchy.<sup>182</sup> As much as it was the woman’s duty to remember her place, it was also the man’s duty to make sure the gender hierarchy remained as ordered. Luther strictly applied this understanding to the Roth case.

Joel Harrington has maintained that the reformers commonly used the imagery of the “stereotypical shrewish, domineering wife (*böse Weib*) and the humiliated, henpecked husband (*Siemann*, or ‘she-man’).”<sup>183</sup> It was believed that the reversed roles of couples was caused by the devil, and this kind of imagery was used not only as a warning example but also for entertainment.<sup>184</sup> Luther’s goal was certainly not entertainment. Accordingly, his expectation of proper masculinity in Stephan’s case gave a lot of weight to the word “man.” The last half of the letter begins with the order to be a man (*[p]roinde vide, ut vir sis*) and ends with a rather pastoral tone, assured that Stephan was a prudent man (*[v]ir prudens es*) and would likely regard Luther’s letter as supportive, as it was driven merely by the need to take care of the couple and resist the devil.<sup>185</sup> With its motive to strengthen Stephan to act properly as a man, this exhortation reminds of those which Luther directed at Justus Jonas.

Luther displayed confidence regarding consensus between him and his comrade: Stephan would understand both what he was saying and the fact that he did it

179 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 442, 6–7.

180 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 442, 8–10. Compare 1 Cor. 11:7: “A man should not cover his own head, because he exists as God’s image and glory. But the woman is man’s glory.” See also Harrington 2005, 79.

181 WA 17<sup>1</sup>, 26. *Marital Estate*.

182 See also Karant-Nunn 2012a, 9.

183 Harrington 2005, 79.

184 Ibid., 79–80.

185 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 443, 12, 21–23.

for the couple's benefit.<sup>186</sup> What is interesting is Luther's aim to create simultaneously a homosocial and pastoral bond between himself and Stephan. Luther placed himself in a pastoral position, which Stephan had expected of him, given that he was the initiator in suggesting his wife to consult Luther. In this position, it was Luther's prerogative to demand a proper way of being from both of the couple. Simultaneously, however, he made an effort to persuade Stephan to be favorably disposed to him, despite the harsh tone of the letter. He flattered Stephan by calling him prudent and intelligent, thereby reasserting Stephan's masculinity and authority. It seems that Luther's main aim was to strengthen the idea of power relations between husband and wife in order to maintain the proper gender system within the Roth marriage, but to do it in such a way that their friendship would be maintained.

Luther's way of treating Stephan—as well as the other men discussed thus far—reveals the homosocial environment in which Luther had lived for a long time. As a child, a boy was usually surrounded by other males at school or in private tutoring. Monasteries and universities were, by and large, all-male environments. Thus, bonding with other men was a significant feature in men's lives from childhood onwards.<sup>187</sup> Indeed, the presence of mainly the male sex was an aspect of scholarly life *per se*, since in society as a whole women often had active roles, such as in the labor of household workshops. As such, life was in many of its areas based on cooperation of women and men. Nonetheless the pervasive feature that constituted societies was its patriarchal structure, within which women as well as men operated.<sup>188</sup>

In understanding Luther vis-à-vis his colleagues, his background in a male-dominated sphere, as well as the idea of humanist friendship or Christian friendship cherished among the evangelicals, has to be considered as a cornerstone. A willingly chosen male friendship, maintained in multiple ways, was often colored by emotional language, for instance. In these relationships, Luther was deemed as (and, I would suggest, he deemed himself as) strong, wise, and capable of advising others—all features of his supremacy in comparison to his associates.<sup>189</sup>

In Stephan's case, however, the factual contents of Luther's exhortation of proper masculinity operated at the theoretical level as well. The same emphasis of proper masculine behavior in a relationship can be found in the treatise *On Marriage Matters* a couple of years later, although in a completely different context.

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186 WA BR 4, no. 1253, 443, 21–22.

187 Wunder 2002, 33; Rublack 2005, 31.

188 Karras 2003, 1; Roper 2016, 283.

189 See Rublack 2005, 30–33. For notions of Luther's position, see, e.g., Wengert 2009, 1: "Martin Luther was, more than anything else, pastor and preacher for his Wittenberg flock." See also Rublack 2005, 30: "Luther was the spiritual leader of the Wittenberg circle."



Luther treated irresponsible men (*buben*) in several manners in the text,<sup>190</sup> and he returned to the issue once again by noting male obligations:

...No, dear fellow. If you have married a woman (lit. tied a woman, *ein weib gebunden*), you are not a free man anymore. God forces and calls you to stay with your wife and child, feed them and raise them and, accordingly, to follow your authority (*oeberkeit*)...<sup>191</sup>

In this passage, as in other texts as well, Luther used the same term *oeberkeit* when speaking of governmental authorities and the man's authority.<sup>192</sup> Luther even equated masculine authorities explicitly by listing "parents, pastors, [and] government (*Elltern, Pfarher, oeberkeit*)."<sup>193</sup> The concept of parents was expressly masculine for Luther, and it referred to fatherly authority.<sup>194</sup> In general, as Diarmaid MacCulloch has maintained, the stress on patriarchy colored the thinking of the reformers of Luther's day.<sup>195</sup> This becomes evident by looking at Luther's texts. Thus, whether it was the man who ran away from his wife or whether it was the wife who refused to follow her husband, Luther's point was the same. The gender hierarchy—that is, the ideal of the man's authority and the woman's submissiveness—was to be strictly maintained.

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This chapter has proved that the most striking feature in all of Luther's discussions concerning the couples examined is his clinging to a quite strict understanding of the gender system and of gendered ways of being. This has become evident in the comparisons made between practical situations and Luther's general remarks in theoretical texts. It seems that as a rule, Luther's idea of the gendered body, which produced both gendered ways of being and social implications, was informed the majority of his discussions—even though he did not often explicate the bodily level itself.

Lyndal Roper has noted that despite Luther's relationship with Katharina von Bora, his "obsession with hierarchy" was a feature that did not vanish from his thinking.<sup>196</sup> This seems somewhat to be the case, given the analyses made in this chapter, even though "obsession" is a quite strong word to use. Luther was, on the whole, keen to hold onto societal and gender hierarchies, as has become clear through the various examinations in this study.<sup>197</sup>

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190 See WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 208–209, 220, 225, 227 *et passim*. *On Marriage Matters*.

191 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 243. *On Marriage Matters*.

192 Compare WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 239; also e.g. WA 30<sup>I</sup>, 36. Sermon on the Sixth Commandment.

193 WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 238. *On Marriage Matters*.

194 See, e.g., WA 17<sup>I</sup>, 27. *Marital Estate*; WA 30<sup>III</sup>, 208, 215. *On Marriage Matters*. On p. 237, both mother and father are mentioned, but thereafter follows an address targeted only to a father.

195 MacCulloch 2003, 649.

196 Roper 2016, 282.

197 The same notion is made in Rublack 2005, 26.

The ways in which Luther used language, particularly in his practical writings, are of utmost importance. It seems that he used pastoral power<sup>198</sup> to persuade and exhort the couples discussed to maintain proper gendered roles in their marriages. Even when playing a clearly pastoral role in relation to the couples, Luther's way of treating women and men was slightly different. In the case of the women, his approach was first and foremost pastoral, whereas vis-à-vis the men this approach was mixed with rhetorical means that highlighted friendship, homosocial bonds, and, to some extent, mutuality. Luther's background and the way his relationships with other men tended to be constructed are apparent in the mixing, as it were, of his pastoral approach and friendship in the cases discussed. All in all, his way of presenting matters concerning the gender system, for example, was an important means for him from the viewpoint of persuasion. Thus, Luther adapted his language on the basis of his understanding of the reader—and also the reader's gender—to get his message across most efficiently. This tendency is perhaps most visible in the practical cases discussed in this and the former chapters.

Hence, although one could have suspected otherwise, these cases are, by and large, very much in line with Luther's overall view of the gender system, as has become clear through comparisons of sermons and treatises, with gender hierarchy and patriarchy being the constitutive elements. However, in the sources examined, Luther's way of treating women was mainly tied to his rhetoric concerning the value of both sexes, with the exception of Ursula Roth. One has to note that "value" did not mean equality by any means. The emphasis on gender hierarchy also explains Luther's stance toward the expression of emotions—such as grief—which seem highly gendered in the cases scrutinized. Even though in general a myriad of intersecting factors affected the way in which people in the sixteenth century considered it suitable to show one's emotions, as Jennifer Vaught has argued,<sup>199</sup> in these cases gender was one of the most constitutive elements in Luther's way of building his rhetoric.

Thus, while in his relationship with von Bora Luther allowed transgressions of proper gender roles for both himself and his wife, in the cases described above he seems not to have done so. An interesting exception is the case of Philipp Melanchthon and his fragility, which Luther idealized. On the basis of Melanchthon's case, and that of the Luthers, it is reasonable to assume that the more personal Luther became, the more pliancy he showed in discussing gendered ways of being. In these exceptional cases, the fundamental constitutive element was not the gendered body. Instead, Luther depicted proper ways of being *despite* the limits that gendered bodiliness would have constituted in theory.

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198 Pastoral power as an aspect of power is discussed, for instance, in Salmesvuori 2014, 7.

199 Vaught 2008, 3.

## VII THE GENDER SYSTEM ROOTED IN AND BEYOND THE BODY: CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined Luther's thinking over a decade, which for him as well as for the evangelical movement was full of tumults and transitions of various kinds. His views about bodiliness, gender, and the gender system have been investigated in different historical and textual contexts. In the beginning of the 1520s, Luther was an Augustinian friar surrounded by other men, especially in the Black Cloister and at the university. Seldom—if ever—did the man in the robe have anything to do with women. The situation began to change by the mid-1520s. As Luther's leadership in the evangelical movement was reinforced in 1522 after his arrival from Wartburg Castle, increasingly he began to be approached, for instance, via letters sent by men and women in need of his advice. Furthermore, a wagon full of former brides of Christ brought Katharina von Bora to Wittenberg in 1523. The Luther's marriage in 1525 was not the first of its kind: several evangelical pastors, monks, and nuns had married before Luther and von Bora, but it certainly was a shock for many—and for the groom himself, as he was keen to let his readers know. The husband and father of the late 1520s, surrounded by wife and children and friends with families, lived in a wholly different social environment than the friar a few years before. His physique changed as well, from skinny to robust, during the decade, as Lyndal Roper has noticed.<sup>1</sup>

The following key research questions were posed: how Luther treated gendered bodiliness when discussing femininity and masculinity, and, second, in what way he constructed gender and the gender system in his writings. In other words, under scrutiny were the ideals, norms, and expectations that he framed as regards the gendered body and feminine and masculine ways of being. Third, it was asked whether Luther's views varied according to the historical context and the genre of the texts; in particular, can a difference be detected between his insights on female and male ways of being presented in the so-called theoretical writings and in the practical texts?

The context of the study was the historical change in the ideals concerning Christian living, with the emphasis being on the secular, not monastic life, and thus it focused on the need to reframe masculinity and femininity in light of these shifting ideals. In the 1520s, there was a lack of socially constructed "behavioural scripts," as often seems to be the case during times of rapid change,<sup>2</sup> leading to the need to provide new ones. As I have shown, Luther participated in the construc-

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1 Roper 2012, esp. 12.

2 The general remark is made in Rublack 2002, 6.

tion of gender and the gender system in close interaction with the past and the present. The examination has shown that Luther was influenced by his medieval heritage. In fact, in questions concerning gender Luther was in several ways profoundly affected by, and even bound to, his medieval heritage,<sup>3</sup> and he formulated his views much in line with his contemporaries; this point should be emphasized more than it is now in the majority of gender studies concerning Luther.

The analyses made in the study have demonstrated that the gendered body was in many respects fundamental in Luther's thinking on the human being and the gender system, even though his discussions did not always concern bodiliness *per se*. I somewhat disagree, however, with Charles Cortright's observation: "...this effort [of discussing the importance of the body in Luther's view] has been similar to trying to engage with someone in conversation about one thing while he or she is intent on talking about other things believed to be more compelling."<sup>4</sup> At times it has been possible to properly capture Luther's views on gendered bodiliness by reading between the lines. Yet, Luther is also very explicit in matters concerning the body and the gendered way of being of both women and men.

The examination of his discussions on the flesh and bodiliness has pointed out that in terms of the entire range of human existence, from daily life to salvation, the body played an important role in Luther's thinking. Like his predecessors, Luther regarded that the body was integrally bound to the soul and spirit. Luther's views remind quite a lot, for instance, of Caroline Walker Bynum's research on the medieval understanding of the significance of the body. Luther's medieval heritage, especially in terms of the multiplicity of discussions concerning both the body and flesh and their different meanings, is very evident in his thinking. Thus, the various nuances of the concepts of the body and flesh can be seen not only in relation to Luther's contextuality, even though it most certainly played a role, but also his dependence on previous discussions.

Furthermore, examination of Luther's usage of the concepts of the body and flesh has made it clear that the rather simplistic statements concerning those aspects, made in the previous research, are not even close to sufficient. The content analysis made of these particular concepts has demonstrated that the flesh could be used by Luther as an image of evil but also as a quite neutral metaphor for human life as life in the flesh, for instance, or as an equivalent to the body in some contexts. The "body" was used in his rhetoric in various ways; in some contexts it is painted as a burden or even something evil, in others as a particularly valuable creation of God.

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3 One of the most recent studies concerning the continuity of Luther's theology with medieval views is Leppin 2016b.

4 Cortright 2011, 241.

The study has shown how difficult it is to try to put Luther in a consistent or certain system of thinking, due to his rather contextual usage of anthropological terms. It has contributed to a correction of mere assumptions made in previous research of the evilness of the flesh, for example, and emphasized the multiple perspectives to the body in Luther's anthropology that have been largely dismissed due to a lack of proper investigation. The matter concerning Luther's anthropology is not clear-cut, either in terms of the different anthropological approaches or in terms of the concepts used. Instead, there emerges a conceptual diversity.

Luther's view of the power relations between the sexes, as presented in the majority of his texts, was by and large in line with the views of his predecessors. His ideas of gender hierarchy, the woman's subordination and otherness, and the man's normativity and dominion being partly on the basis of creation and partly the fall, show continuity with the medieval views. In terms of these continuities, this study supports the conclusions of scholars such as Mickey Mattox and Charles Cortright, who have examined similar themes, by pointing out that Luther's thinking cannot be understood without taking his medieval heritage thoroughly into account. In addition, the study illustrates that formulations made on the basis of Luther's later works concerning gender hierarchy cannot be straightforwardly applied to his thought during the 1520s.

The practical arrangement of marriage as the ideal concerning both sexes, which was an essential part of Luther's discussion of gender hierarchy, was a theme that separated him (and his colleagues) from previous anthropological views, however. Luther's ideas of the natural sexual urges of the human being, for instance, was a core difference between his anthropological deductions and the perspective of his predecessors—a point made also by both Merry Wiesner-Hanks and Susan Karant-Nunn, for example.<sup>5</sup> If angelic life in the cloister had hitherto been the most exalted way of life for the human being, Luther insisted on placing matrimony in the highest position. These views were widely adopted and implemented by Luther's coworkers; hence, he was by no means a unique thinker on this matter. Even though he showed some hesitation on the question of marriage of monks in the very beginning of the 1520s, which was not an issue for several of his contemporaries, his tone became rapidly self-assured.

Together with his colleagues, Luther was formulating a Christian anthropology wherein the human body and its urges were made the explanatory factor. Accordingly, societal deductions concerning the gender system were made in accordance with their rhetoric concerning the body. The way in which Luther in the beginning of the decade treated married life as martyrdom—both implicitly and explicitly, with labor in the case of women and the whole of married life in the case

5 Karant-Nunn 2012a, 4; Wiesner-Hanks 2016, 6.

of men—even suggests that a new kind of ideal Christian was under construction. Even though scholars have studied Luther's emphasis on matrimony in depth, it has not been properly explained before that the issue not only concerned certain societal arrangements but was profoundly linked to Luther's anthropological thinking.

In terms of previous scholarship, I have shown that this study has much to offer on the topics of gendered bodiliness and the gender system. First, the theme that has received little scholarly interest thus far is Luther's views on masculinity. The most detailed works about Luther's thinking on men are Merry Wiesner-Hanks's and Susan Karant-Nunn's articles from 2008 and 2012, discussed in the study, which analyze Luther's idea of himself as a man, his views on male lust, and Luther as a father. They concentrate, however, especially on the 1530s and 1540s. Most often the conclusions about masculinity in Luther's thinking have been made merely as a by-product of discussions of femininity, and often in the context of his later views. This is understandable since the sexes mirror each other in Luther's rhetoric. However, this study has proved that: 1) masculinity deserves to be specifically examined in its own right so that the whole of Luther's gendered anthropology may be properly understood, and 2) the time frame from 1520 to 1530 deserves special attention due to the neglect of previous research on this period.

During the 1520s, Luther left no doubt about whether man was in every respect the more important human being than the woman. One of the most significant reasons for the superiority and normativity of man was his physical and bodily structure. According to Luther, the male body represented the image of the human being more fully and more perfectly than the female one. Thus, the man's body and his way of being were the norms for Luther. He tended to define the woman only in relation to and through the man.

In Luther's discussions, masculine features were strength, rationality and prudence, tenaciousness, control, and order; these reflected a continuum with many medieval discussions on proper masculinity. Luther's overall evaluation of ideal masculinity was impacted by the construction of the proper societal arrangement, and this was also the reason in the first place that he had to explicate his views of how to be a man. The proper way of being consisted of being a husband, fathering and making a living for the family. Hence, the dominance that the man had also demanded responsibility, and the prerogatives that Luther described as the man's part were the result of an essential difference between the sexes. Thus, for a man, gaining social acceptance was ultimately based on having a male body. As such, overall the examination concerning masculinity produced predictable results.

Luther guided his coworkers, such as Justus Jonas, John Agricola, and Stephan Roth, toward ideal masculinity through the pastoral role that he adopted in his correspondence. These men were not already representatives of the ideal male

way of being, but Luther's trainees in manhood; he reminded them of their proper role, sometimes gently, sometimes more strongly. He thus aspired to lead the men into the proper Christian way of being, which belonged to his formulations of the new ideal of the human being. In all of these cases, the continuity between the theoretical ideal of proper male way of being and the practical application went hand in hand. It must be further noted that the intersection of gender, social position, and religious conviction affected his formulations of proper masculinity; Luther's rhetoric concerning Jerome Emser, for example, suggests that he was keen to denigrate his religious-political opponents by means of gendered images that questioned their masculinity and made them both ridiculous and suspicious.

Luther applied his general thinking of masculinity to real-life men to a limited degree, however. Philipp Melanchthon seems to have been somewhat of a special case in Luther's thinking, as is evident in the second part of the study. Melanchthon's fragility—even pitifulness, as Luther called it—became an ideal masculinity that he opposed against the masculinity of the early church theologians. Thus, Melanchthon's actual way of being was not guided toward an ideal representation, as in the case of the men mentioned above, but used and turned around by Luther. A long-term comparative analysis of Luther's view of Melanchthon's masculinity—a fascinating topic for new research—would be needed in order to properly determine why Luther's rhetoric concerning him differed from the others. Meanwhile it is safe to say that Luther formulated his rhetoric in Melanchthon's case to best suit his own purposes; in this particular context, it was possible for him to highlight his and his colleagues' proper way of being *Hausväter* with the help of the picture he painted of Melanchthon. Luther hence used gendered images to emphasize his and his allies' significance in a similar way to how he denigrated his opponents. Luther's contextuality is particularly well evident in Melanchthon's case.

Luther's own self-narration throughout the 1520s further supports the argument that his ideals concerning masculinity were flexible in practice. In the beginning of the decade, Luther tended to emphasize his masculinity in ways that were in keeping with his overall view of masculinity, described above, and several medieval ideals, which surprisingly included the idea of the struggle of clerics. He admitted, on the one hand, that his body caused him troubles as he experienced sexual desire and ejaculations. On the other hand, he seems to have regarded strength, virility, and self-control—the ideal masculine features—as his particular qualities. Even though Luther's own image mirrored in this way the late medieval monastic masculinity, it did not fit with his claims regarding the proper channeling of male desire into matrimony. Thus, Luther began to follow the norm, as it were, only after years of rumination. This observation has been made in previous research, and the reasons for Luther's hesitation have been surveyed as well. I would

suggest that one critical factor may have been the social pressure that intensified during the years, affecting all evangelical pastors, including Luther. Hence, the need to construct his masculinity anew, the whole of his self-fashioning, became the cornerstone of his actions. As I have noted, this motive was connected with the other political, religious, and personal reasons that modern scholars have used to explain the quite sudden change in Luther's life.

Quite swiftly after marrying, Luther began to construct his own masculinity in relation to the framework of the *Hausvater* ideal. According to the investigation here, male bonding with other husbands and fathers became one of the visible features in his rhetoric. This is evident in his discussions about the feelings that his own wedding night produced and in his promise to Georg Spalatin to share the sexual experience on the wedding night by also having sex then. The bonding is also visible in Luther's joy over his first-born son, as he wrote to other fathers, and in the cases of John Agricola and Stephan Roth, for instance, with whom Luther created not only pastoral but also homosocial bonds via the shared experience of being a husband. All of these examples supported Luther's discursive means by means of which he connected himself with his new reference group in a very physical way. The way that Luther expressed himself—for instance, through homosocial bonding—is of special importance, since he performed his gendered role as a man particularly through his language and means of discussion.

By the late 1520s, Luther's masculinity was in accordance with his own ideals of masculine features and his role as *Hausvater*. However, he still tended to allow himself behavior that he denied other men. Mourning serves as a specific example of this. In his own grief after his daughter's death, Luther noted having emotions that he deemed effeminate. After his father's death he expressed overwhelming grief, which he judged to be pious and acceptable. At the same time, he demanded that Justus Jonas suppress his emotions and instead stay strong and maintain prudence in mourning.

In terms of women, this study has questioned the oft-repeated view of the influence of Luther's marriage on his "new perspectives on the dignity and responsibility of women" or the like.<sup>6</sup> By and large, Luther tended to place women under men's dominion in every respect—and in every genre of his texts. The gender system with its hierarchies was thus idealized and standardized by Luther in a very similar fashion throughout the 1520s. Luther depicted femininity as subordination and otherness, which, as such, was valuable since God had created it to be that way. In general, women were seen to be talkative, less clever than men, and, all in all, lesser in their being. Their primary role was to be obedient and to act as the channel of the realization of male sexuality. These notions are in line with previous

6 Quotation from Lindberg 1996, 102.



scholarship that has discussed “the young Luther’s” views on women. These views reflect continuity with many medieval views and parallel contemporary opinions. However, whether Luther applied in practice his ideas of the proper female way of being or of the power of men over them was dictated by the situation at hand.

Luther’s relationships with contemporary women have been studied by modern scholars such as Merry Wiesner-Hanks, Susan Karant-Nunn, Peter Matheson, and Charlotte Methuen. This study has contributed by providing a more in-depth picture. When dealing with women in the early 1520s—for example, Katharina Schütz Zell and the three court ladies—Luther regarded them as active agents directing their own lives. He prompted them to act in ways that served them to build their lives in accordance with their evangelical faith. It is important to note that this served the overall goals of both Luther himself and the evangelical movement: in fact, these two motives were deeply intertwined in his rhetoric. However, Luther’s general evaluation of women can be seen in his writing to these women in the form of presenting them as the ones illuminated by God’s grace, which made them exceptions to the rule. He treated them first and foremost as examples of faithful Christians, in some cases explicitly, in others implicitly. In only one case, that of Florentina von Oberweimar, was the woman represented explicitly as a passive object, although she was credited with her own decision-making as well. Luther’s text concerning von Oberweimar was the only one intended for public use, which in part explains the difference.

In the cases of other contemporary women—Elisabeth Agricola, Katharina Jonas, and Ursula Roth—Luther’s theoretical and practical views seem to be coherent. He treated these women in accordance with his overall evaluation of the proper feminine way of being. Like their husbands, the wives were to be directed toward the ideal representation of womanhood, and as in the case of men, Luther exhorted them with both kind and rather strict words, depending on the situation. Especially in his treatment of Ursula Roth, one can detect not only Luther’s disapproval of her way of being but also strong echoes of his theoretical depictions of such themes as female stubbornness and wickedness.

Since Luther had a similar way of applying his theoretical insights to both the wives and husbands examined here, it seems quite clear that he was not only guiding women and men but evangelical couples as a unit toward his ideal gendered way of being, which included gender hierarchy as a significant component. Furthermore, the Agricola couple and the Jonas couple were not only evangelical but also pastoral pairs, whose larger representation was under construction among the evangelicals in general. These aspects could also partly explain Luther’s more intense orientation toward his theoretical views than in the cases of individual

women in the early 1520s. Perhaps Luther's belief in higher evangelical morals had faced challenges by the late 1520s as well.

Marjorie Plummer has noted in particular that by the 1530s and 1540s, the evangelical leaders had had to face moral misconduct by their pastors, which "undercut their assertions that marriage would lead to social order."<sup>7</sup> The Peasants' Revolt in the mid-1520s had also affected how the evangelical leaders viewed people's capability to act as Christians. Due to social disturbances, which both secular and religious leaders reacted to, the actions of laypeople began to be more supervised while attempts to stabilize the movement were increasing. One example is the opportunity of laywomen and men to speak and write publicly, which began to diminish at the turn of the decade, and possibly even by 1525, as suggested by Ulrike Zitzlsperger.<sup>8</sup> It would be logical to see Luther's reactions as part of this process. It is possible that while constructing the ideal couple, Luther's aim was to do this by maintaining the traditional social and gender order.

At least one evangelical couple was an exception to the rule, however: Katharina von Bora and Luther himself, as my discussion on Luther's masculinity points out. Von Bora's active and dominant role within the Luther household has been noted in the previous research, even to the extent of describing her as a kind of prime representative of Reformation era women. I would suggest that this is due to at least two things: the fact that she was the wife of Luther and the way Luther in which credited her in his writings.

I argue that by 1530, Luther's stance toward his wife was twofold. At the very beginning of their relationship, Luther clearly presented her as other. This position, as well as his idea of gender hierarchy, is also somewhat visible in his later discussions on his wife. On the other hand, in many contexts Luther tended to give von Bora a status that was exempt from his overall views on womanhood. He noted her dominance, and what is even more interesting, he shared the masculine sphere with her by calling her by masculine honorifics such as *Herr* and *dominus*. This point has not been really discussed in modern scholarship. Arguably, von Bora's personality, as well as her noble origins, played an important role in how Luther formulated his words. However, the usage of gendered euphemisms and puns that represented a reversal of the gender hierarchy also placed Luther more strongly among husbands.

Through von Bora, Luther had the opportunity to observe the female body and its functions more closely. His discussions of morning sickness during pregnancy, or von Bora's state after labor, for example, offer a window onto their everyday physical life. As I have noted, in 1522 Luther saw fruitful women as fit, clean,

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7 Plummer 2012, 277.

8 Zitzlsperger 2003, 379.

and happy. Von Bora's bodiliness arguably widened Luther's perspectives of what it was to be a woman and possess a female body. On the basis of the analyses in this study, it can be said that even though von Bora was, by and large, similar to other women from a bodily point of view, Luther accepted a very different way of being for her than for other women.

Michelle Rosaldo has made an important general observation that "...women's place in human social life is not in any direct sense a product of the things she does (or even less a function of what, biologically, she is) but of the meaning her activities acquire through concrete social interaction."<sup>9</sup> Even though in the historical context where Luther lived the position of the body and the significance of its functions in constructing gender were constitutive, Rosaldo's remark holds true regarding Luther's rhetoric, not only about women but also about men. He formulated his ideals, norms, and expectations of the sexes and the gender system deeply in terms of social interaction, which had an effect on how he framed both his output and the contents of his views.

When studying the body in Luther's theology, Charles Cortright, for his part, has noted that "Luther's thinking was not completely settled in 1527..."<sup>10</sup> I wonder whether it is ever possible to point to a period when Luther's thinking reached a state of constancy—on the contrary, it is quite reasonable to assume that a human being's thinking remains in a state of evaluation and reevaluation throughout her life. In the vein of this kind of thought, Mickey Mattox has maintained that

...many now agree, Luther should be thought of as a figure fully in historical motion, one who, to be sure, retained a certain Augustinian and, yes, evangelical orientation throughout his career, but who nevertheless must be met ever and again as a man who remained an extraordinarily insightful and creative thinker, one who broke through to new insights throughout his career. ... [The differences between the interpretations of younger and elder Luther are due] to the flesh and blood of a man who continued ever to develop, one who remained a moving, and elusive, historical target.<sup>11</sup>

This study has pointed out that in terms of the 1520s, Mattox's evaluation is a bit too bold, however. On an *overall* level, Luther's thought concerning the gender system did not undergo major changes even in practice during the 1520s; instead, one can speak of smaller adjustments over the years.

As regards the question of whether there was a difference between Luther's theoretical and practical viewpoints, the study has shown that the answer is not a simple "yes" or "no." His theoretical insights often rose from very practical situations. Furthermore, theory and practice are intertwined on many levels in his texts. In most of his writings—whether sermons, treatises or correspondence—Luther

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9 Rosaldo 1980, 400.

10 Cortright 2011, 104.

11 Mattox 2009, 107–108.

formulated quite strict ideals and norms concerning gendered ways of being. These views, represented both on the overall level and in practical situations, create a rather coherent continuum all through the 1520s. In some real-life cases, however, he was more flexible. Therefore, it is not the difference between theory and practice per se that is pervasive in Luther's texts but rather a continuity, or discontinuity, between theory and practice, which is dictated by the context and the overall situation.<sup>12</sup> The two core ideas are: *the closer to Luther, the more special the case* and *the more strategically important for Luther, the more special the case*. Luther himself, von Bora, and Melanchthon serve as examples of Luther's innermost circle. Katharina Schütz Zell and, in a sense, Frederick the Wise (given the lack of discussion about his concubine) are examples of strategically important contacts. In many other situations discussed in this study, including not only Luther's opponents but also his friends, he did not tolerate—or he tolerated far less—transgressions of his norms concerning the gender system.

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12 Volker Leppin has made a strikingly similar conclusion as regards a completely different topic, namely, the question of Luther's continuity with medieval views in general. See Leppin 2014b, 123.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie
AG	Argula von Grumbach
DDStA	Martin Luther: Deutsch-Deutsche Studienausgabe. Leipzig 2012–.
FO	Florentina von Oberweimar
HAik	Historiallinen Aikakauskirja
HYK	Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto
KSZ	Katharina Schütz Zell
LDStA	Martin Luther: Lateinisch-Deutsche Studienausgabe. Leipzig 2006–2009.
LW	Luther's Works. Ed. J. Pelikan and H. Lehmann. St. Louis 1957–.
NDB	Neue deutsche Biographie
SKHS	Suomen kirkkohistoriallinen seura
SKHST	Suomen kirkkohistoriallisen seuran julkaisuja
StA	Studienausgabe/Martin Luther; in Zusammenarb mit. Helmar Junghans ... [et al.] Hg. Hans-Ulrich Delius. Berlin 1979–.
STKS	Suomalainen Teologinen Kirjallisuusseura
STKSJ	Suomalaisen Teologisen Kirjallisuusseuran julkaisuja
WA	D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Weimar 1883–.
WA BR	D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel. Weimar 1930–.
WA DB	D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Deutsche Bibel. Weimar 1906–.
WA TR	D. Martin Luther's Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Tischreden. Weimar 1912–.



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KSZ

1999 (1524)

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- WA 10<sup>III</sup>, 312b–331b. Sermon von der Geburt Mariä 1522.
- WA 11, 394–400. Dem fursichtigen und weyßen Leonhard Koppen, Burger zu Torgaw, meynem besondern freunde, Gnad und frid Martinus Luther 1523.
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 WA BR 4, no 1100, 198. An Wenzeslaus Link (c. May 4, 1527).  
 WA BR 4, no 1111, 210. An Johann Agricola (June 10, 1527?).  
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